THE MYSTERY OF CLEMENT DUNRAVEN.

BY JEAN MIDDLEMAS,

Author of "A Girl in a Thousand," "Touch and Go," "Sealed by a Kiss," "By Fate Alone," etc.

CLEMENT STARTED WHEN HE SAW LISBETH.

CHAPTER XXI.—(CONTINUED.)

Lisbeth consigned her household to the care of Nurse Green and the little maid, put on her hat and cloak, tenderly kissed little Lisa, and then got into the pony trap waiting for her.

Up the front way Tom drove her, to the big front door. Why he did this is best known to himself. Probably the reasoning was, that the pony carriage always went to front door, for very assuredly the Glendinning family had until now invariably arrived at the back.

Still, it was a fitting entry for Lisbeth, coming for the first time into the house that should by right have been her home.

She scarcely realised it, however: she felt as one stunned, and stumbled along the way Fate had marked out for her without heeding her footsteps. Two or three minutes more, and she had walked across the large carpeted hall, whose luxurious appurtenances she felt rather than saw, and, the library door having been opened by the butler, she was ushered into Lady Gertrude's presence.

Before the man had fairly shut it and taken his departure, Lisbeth was in Lady Gertrude's arms.

Impulsive, loving Lady Gertrude knew no class-distinctions in the face of this great trouble and sorrow, and even as if she had been her own sister she received poor, hardly-tried Lisbeth Glendinning.

Then she took off her hat and cloak with her own hands, stroked the luxuriant brown hair off her beautiful brow, and kissing her once again, made her sit down beside her on the sofa, where Clement had been sitting not an hour ago.

Scarcely had she settled her comfortably, and surrounded her with the thousand little attentions which a well-bred woman knows so well how to dispense, the door opened, and Sir Clement returned to see how his little wife was faring. He had been wonderfully "sans paths soins" with Lady Gertrude of late.

He started when he saw Lisbeth, and certainly would have spared himself this tangle in the skein of circumstances, had he had any idea that she was in the house.

if the scene of excitement, and he said nothing
[illegible] that she was in the house.

CHAPTER XXII.—How Elvira Takes the News

Elvira Delane was inconsolable. She could neither sleep nor eat, and even during the short time that had elapsed since the death of Pierce Vaughan had been established without a doubt, she had lost all her roundness of form, her gay innocuous manner, and the passing charm, which was the characteristic of her beauty, had given place to a subdued melancholy expression.

She scarcely ever left her own particular drawing room, [illegible] as bright with its artistic coloring. There were no flowers in the rare china vases now, and here and there a piece of black crape veiled some picture or bric-a-brac which was especially connected in Elvira's mind with the dead man.

Of course she had donned a black garment and would trail her long skirts up and down this room for hours, with a dismal monotony that verged on madness.

She was not engaged to Pierce Vaughan. Except by small attentions he had never manifested any especial regard for her, yet she had elected to care for him, and since his death had set him up as a sort of idol.

"It was preposterous, ridiculous, absurd," as said even Lady Marcia, who was Pierce Vaughan's particular friend, and fully prepared, as she expressed it, "to mourn him with all fitness, but this behavior of Elvira's was past all bearing, and the girl ought to be sent to a madhouse at once."

Lady Marcia did not in the least think that Elvira was mad; it was only a flippant off-hand way of expressing her disapproval. Yet she was, perhaps, nearer the truth than she suspected. That Elvira would recover from the condition of mind which mental strain had produced there was every reason to expect, that is, if she were properly taken in hand; but for the time there was no doubt of it; she was acting alike the laws of common sense and conventionality on one side without being in the very least aware that she was doing anything out of the way, or drawing down upon herself the remarks of the entire neighborhood. Never had a girl been more in want of a mother to guide her than Elvira was during this trying time. Lady Marcia, fond of her, and "good fellow" though she was, was far too injudicious a woman to be of any use. On the contrary, her off-hand [illegible] remarks did harm instead of good, and as for Delane, the millionaire, himself, he was too stolidly engulfed in his own money bags to notice Elvira's vagaries.

The probability is he would not have known that she was behaving in any unusual manner if Lady Marcia had not talked to him about it every time she saw him. Nor did her words make much impression; he was accustomed to think that all that Elvira did was well, and he was not inclined to blame her now.

"Let the girl alone, she'll forget all about the poor fellow in time."

And in this, stolid Mr Delane was wiser than chattering, energetic Lady Marcia. The friend whose counsels and loving words would have had the most beneficial effect on Elvira was Lady Gertrude Dunraven, but it had been so impressed on Elvira that Lady Gertrude was for the present to be told nothing about the dreadful event that had happened, that Elvira had kept carefully away from Abbeye Court.

Lady Gertrude had asked to see her; had, in fact, sent more than one message, but Elvira had not even replied. She was in a busy, nervous, unhappy frame of mind, ready to take offence where no offence was intended, and she so resented a note she had received from Sir Clement, in which he had asked her not in any way to communicate with Lady Gertrude on the dreadful subject, that she said she should not go near them if she could not say what she liked, and she decided to shut herself up still more in the privacy of her own apartments.

As for Lisbeth, the idea of comforting her

was the very last thing that entered Elvira's head. She took a diametrically opposite view from that taken by the more tender-hearted Lady Gertrude, and was perpetually reproving herself for ever having spoken to or done any kindly action for a woman who was the daughter of such a father.

For Elvira Delane believed firmly in Jim Glendinning's guilt; nay, more, she believed in the heredity of crime. How could Lisbeth be otherwise than vile and bad considering her parentage?

Perchance even Miss Delane might have given Jim Glendinning the benefit of the doubt, and thought it just possible that Pierce Vaughan had fallen accidentally into the water during the turbulence of the storm, had it not been for his former conviction, and in this she did not stand alone, for one-half of the population of Coleshill argued the matter out with the other half, the opinion about Jim Glendinning's guilt being pretty equally divided.

Thus do our sins rise up in judgment against us when we ourselves are striving down by suspicion.

There was no evidence against Glendinning, save that he had been seen by Brown and his men walking across the open as though coming from the lake at the time when they believed Pierce Vaughan to be there.

Scarcely sufficient evidence, surely, to hang a man or even to cause him to be taken up on suspicion, but for that previous conviction which weighed so heavily against him, both with the coroner and with the magistrate before whom he was taken a few days after the inquest, and who was none other than Sir Miles Berkeley.

Sir Miles would most gladly have discussed the case with all its pros and cons with his old friend and brother magistrate Sir Clement, but Sir Clement kept so carefully out of the way that to approach him on the subject was absolutely impossible. A note which Sir Miles had written to him on the subject had received a curt reply to the effect that he did not wish to give his opinion and thus in any way influence that of another person. Thus he was bound to trust to his own unguided instinct, for after all it was little more. Nor was he in any way helped to his decision by Elvira, for since Pierce Vaughan's death had been a known fact she had refused to see Sir Miles Berkeley—a circumstance which rendered him very unhappy at the time, but which was in reality most desirable if he wished to retain any affection for her, or if there was any chance of her ultimately becoming his wife. As, in the face of her insane devotion to Pierce Vaughan's memory, how could he even have put in a petition for her hand?

But at that moment marrying and giving in marriage was not thought of by either of them; they were both too much engrossed in contemplation of what the newspapers called the Coleshill mystery. Thus for several days events glided on, if not peacefully, at least monotonously.

Jim Glendinning, of course, loudly protest-

least monotonously.

Jim Glendinning, of course, loudly protesting his innocence, had been transferred from the police cells at Coleshill to a town nine miles off, where the assizes would be held in a few weeks.

Lisbeth had visited him there once or twice. She alone, with the exception of Clement Dunraven, knew positively that he was innocent. Yet, what could she say? She must wait and hope that the evidence, not being strong enough, he would be set free.

For the time he must suffer as she was doing, suffer for Clement Dunraven's sake—and hers.

Truly in this instance the sin of the child was being visited on the father.

Notwithstanding her many shortcomings, shortcomings which, for the most part, were the outcome of her intense and blind love for Clement Dunraven, Lisbeth Glendenning had strong faith.

She could not believe that the innocent would be allowed to suffer for the guilty.

"My father must get off," she repeated constantly to herself, "and Lady Gertrude to the end of her life will be shielded from all knowledge of the real truth."

She devoted all her energies to bring about these two results, though as far as the first was concerned she was very powerless considering that she was absent at Hampstead on the day of Pierce Vaughan's disappearance.

Lady Marcia had been once or twice to the cottage, eager to discuss Jim Glendinning's position and his chances of escape from it with Lisbeth, hoping perchance that some casual word would throw a fresh light on the subject.

But silent as she had become of late, Lisbeth was reticent with every one, and especially so with Lady Marcia, who, she had soon discovered, believed in Glendinning's guilt, being, as she did not mind averring, "well-kept up in her belief that he was the criminal by Miss Delane," who was virulently strong in her invectives against him.

It may, therefore, be supposed that Lady Marcia was no welcome visitor at Lisbeth's cottage, and if she could act as a great lady would have done, she would gladly have denied herself to this pertinacious caller.

On the morning that she was sent for to go to Lady Gertrude at Aboyne Court, she saw, as she was stirring from her own door, Lady Marcia's carriage in the distance, and she by no means regretted that on this occasion she would be absent, supposing that Lady Marcia was going to the cottage.

Exactly, she had no special object for a drive, so thought she would call and ask if Lisbeth had heard anything new.

When the little maid, who was far more loquacious than her mistress, informed her that Lisbeth had gone to Aboyne Court, the pony carriage having been sent for her, Lady Marcia's surprise was excessive. What could it mean? What could they want with her there? Were they, of all people, going to try and get up a faction to save Glendinning? Christian virtues and justice, the Dunravens always talked a lot about that sort of thing; but surely there was a moderation. Their own cousin had been murdered, and to send for Lisbeth Glendinning! It was most strange. When she came to think of it, Clement Dunraven's behavior had been very strange from the very commencement. There was a mystery about that man which she, notwithstanding her usual sharpness, had failed to fathom, but, as with most mysteries, she supposed a sudden light would be thrown on it some day when she least expected it.

This and much more did Lady Marcia's active brain involve, having given her coachman the order to drive to Beliegrande.

Lady Marcia was one of those women who always must tell some one when any new or startling event occurred. In the present instance she elected to inform Elvira that Lisbeth had been sent for to Aboyne Court.

In Elvira's strangely bewildered and illogically nervous condition nothing could be worse for her than to have any gossip of the sort conveyed. But this Lady Marcia did not consider; it pleased her to goad Elvira and to listen to Elvira's indignation, and beyond that she did not look.

In fact, severely as Lady Marcia at times took Elvira to task for "her absurdity in behaving as though she were Pierce Vaughan's widow," the very extravagance of the girl's infatuation amused her. It was the only bit of excitement to be got out of this ghastly business now that Jim Glendinning had been removed from Coleshill, and in her flippant thoughtless way she rather encouraged it by her constant prating and talking on the subject, even while she found fault with the girl for constantly harping on the same string. Nevertheless she thought she had Elvira's interest at heart.

Lady Marcia, as a rule, erred "from want of thought rather than from want of heart." She certainly did so on this occasion when, without waiting to be announced, she dashed impetuously into Elvira's room and exclaimed—

"Lisbeth Glendinning has been sent for to Aboyne Court, and the Dunravens are going to help her to get her father off."

"Elvira had been alone for more than two hours, and her thoughts had been feeding on themselves; nothing having occurred to produce fresh matter for consideration, apart from the dreadful subject which had of late taken such a terrible hold on her. She was totally unstrung. Lady Marcia's ill-advised and unauthentic announcement brought the nervous excitement under which she was laboring to a climax. She started up from her seat and began to walk about the room with rapid strides, very different from the calm monotonous pace in which she usually indulged.

She called Jim Glendinning by names Lady Marcia never expected to find in her vocabulary, evoking the wrath of Heaven upon his head with terrible vindictiveness; then she transferred her ire to the Dunravens, saying Lady Gertrude was a fool to be hoodwinked, and that she believed that Sir Clement, who had always a spite against Pierce Vaughan had paid this miscreant Glendinning to put him out of the way, since "no motive" was the plea on which it was said the suspected man would get off.

This tirade came forth in a torrent which Lady Marcia was powerless to stem. It absolutely took her breath away; nor, when at last she did succeed in speaking, did she by any means check it, since her suggestion that it was more to Pierce Vaughan's interest to get rid of Sir Clement than for Sir Clement to wish his cousin out of the way, only served to render Elvira still more violently wrathful.

Lady Marcia was growing alarmed and kept her eye on the bell. She had never seen Elvira so excited before, brisk and emotional, though, some of their interviews had been since late events had engrossed their attention.

She decided that she would drive home to Dr. Waters's and consult him about Mr.

She decided that she would drive home by Dr Watson's and consult him, since Mr Delane was too stupid to see that there was some danger in the girl's condition. This was the most sensible conclusion to which Lady Marcia had arrived for some time, and probably had she been longer sighted, she would have reached it sooner.

Before, however, she had time to carry it into effect, Elvira's illness, for illness it unquestionably was, became more serious. She gave one piercing shriek and then fell full length on the floor, to all appearance in a dead faint.

Now the bell was really rung, and Dr Watson was sent for in hot haste. Lady Marcia and the maid succeeded in lifting Elvira on to the sofa, and here she lay unconscious until the doctor arrived.

He ordered her at once to bed, and said that a trained nurse must be sent for without delay, remaining with her himself until consciousness returned, and listened for a while to her semi-delirious mutterings.

The violence of the storm being over, she seemed too prostrate and weak to do more than murmur in low tones. He gave his orders very strictly to the maid, and when Lady Marcia followed him out of the room to ask the nature of her friend's illness, he answered her very sharply.

"Nerves, madam; if she is not kept very quiet I will not answer for her reason or her life. You, above all, are not to go near her."

Dr Watson was a clever little Scotchman, with very brusque, rude manners, yet he attended all the country families round about. They put up with his manners because he inspired faith.

Lady Marcia was not, however, pleased with him. No one detested to be snubbed more than she.

"And why, pray, am I to be excluded?" she asked, haughtily.

"Because you are injudicious, and let your tongue run away with you."

"Really, doctor——"

"Tut, tut, tut; let me have my way, Lady Marcia. Miss Delane must be kept perfectly quiet. No one is to go near her but the nurse, who will receive orders from me, and perhaps her father, on tip-toe, but he is not to speak."

"Do you think her case so very grave?"

"I think we have had about enough talk about the manner in which that fellow Vaughan came by his death. There is Lady Gertrude Danraven, who was going on so well, is quite ill; Sir Clement looks as if he were in the very jaws of death; Lisbeth Glendinning, who is one of the most useful and practical women housekeepers, has lost all her energy and fire, and now this poor child is in a most critical condition. I ask you, Lady Marcia, was this Mr Pierce Vaughan worth so many wrecked lives?"

"Poor Pierce!" ejaculated Lady Marcia.

"Good gracious, now you are going to begin—well, I am off. My hands are quite full enough just now. I don't want any more patients at present."

He was downstairs before she could stop him, and at the hall door, he met Mr Delane coming in with Sir Miles Barkeley.

Mr Delane had only just heard of Elvira's illness, having been sent for from Caleshill, where he was attending a hospital meeting.

Dr Miles, being also on the board, had accompanied him back to Bellegrande to learn what was really the matter.

Dr Watson was by no means re-assuring. It was his intention to frighten all Elvira's friends, so that he might ensure strict attention to his orders.

Nor was he quite sure that she would get quite well, or ever again be the bright, sprightly Elvira she had been of yore.

The little doctor thoroughly succeeded in making the two men most anxious and uncomfortable, but this he did not in the least mind, but drove off muttering to himself as was his wont—

"All about the vagrian, for he was a vagrian, and all the fuss is made because the world's quit of him. I must pull that little girl round if I can, but these nervous cases are deuced troublesome. I hate 'em. If I succeed, from Dr Physic I shall have to transform myself into Dr Love. Who shall it be? Why, Sir Miles, of course. What a fool you are Watson, don't you see he is over head and ears in love, or he would not look so glum about the throat?"

So when Sir Miles was in the depths of despair about Elvira's desperate condition he had found a partisan of whom he little dreamt.

But a good many complications and anxieties and worries would have to be overcome before Dr Watson would be in a position to help him, even if the auspicious moment ever arrived.

CHAPTER XXIII.—Waiting for the Verdict.

Christmas is over, and the New Year has come!

On the anniversary of the Dunravens' wedding day, Jim Glendinning is to be tried. It is a dreary way of celebrating what should be the most auspicious day in their lives, but to Sir Clement it seems a fitting one.

As Dr Watson had said, Lady Gertrude had been very ill after she had been told of the dreadful calamity that had befallen; and though she was now going about more or less in her old way, she had never got up her strength, and her condition was one more anxiety added to Sir Clement's already heavy lot. What astonished and bewildered him was the manner in which Lisbeth devoted herself to Lady Gertrude; in fact, if it had not been for Lisbeth it is doubtful whether the poor little woman would not have succumbed from sheer weakness and nervous prostration.

Somewhat to the relief of the family at the cottage, Lisbeth spent several hours each day at the Abeyne Court, nursing Lady Gertrude, and seeing that all her smallest wants were attended to. It seemed as if Lisbeth could not do enough for her in order to make up to her in some degree for the mistake and false position in which she had weakly allowed her to be placed.

This behavior on Lisbeth's part was totally incomprehensible to Sir Clement; if she had hated her, spited her, done all she could to make life intolerable to her, he could have understood it, but this devotion to the woman who had stepped into her place was a delicate trait of character which his coarser nature failed utterly to comprehend. It puzzled him still more because he did not fail to remark that Lisbeth never bestowed even a glance on little Clement—the baby heir. Whenever he chanced to be brought into the room where Lisbeth was she would grow flustered and pained and hurried. She forgave Lady Gertrude freely for being in the place that by right belonged to her, for she argued: Why should she be vindictive against her on this account? Had not she herself given it to her? But the boy, who came between Lisbeth and not only her birthright, but her father's heart—no, she could not forgive him.

She had never kissed him, even when Lady Gertrude asked her to do so. "She did not

She had never kissed him, even when Lady Gertrude asked her to do so. "She did not care for little babies so young as that one," she said, by way of explanation, and she never looked the way that he was if she could possibly help it.

If she had had no child of her own probably she would have taken to him, even as she did to his mother, for Clement's sake, and in expiation of the wrong that had been done. But her own maternal instinct was so strong: it seemed to her of late almost as if she loved Lisa better than the man for whom she had made such a tremendous sacrifice.

"Nothing kills love," was Lisbeth's belief; still, if she had been a more educated woman, capable of analysing as well as feeling, she would have known that crime such as that of which she believed Sir Clement to be guilty must, even if unconsciously, loosen affection, and that it was rather from the loyalty of her own nature than from her living, passionate love for him that Lisbeth was staunch and true, even through evil report. Had this not been so, her position at Aboyne Court would have been so strained as to be absolutely intolerable.

Lisbeth felt that the day had gone by when love-making between them was possible.

It seemed such a long time since the evening when he had strolled down to the cottage after dinner, that she could scarcely believe he was the same Clement, or she the same Lisbeth.

If he took her hand now she withdrew it; if he looked into her eyes she turned away, and yet she was so ready to give up her life and happiness for Clement Dunraven as she had ever been.

He did not bid her depart; he did not tell her what pain it was to him to see her at the Court, devoting herself so lovingly to his invalid wife. He did not tell her this, because he feared that she would then lose sight of her altogether. Still, the pain that Clement felt at having Lisbeth so constantly near and yet so far removed from his inner life, was excruciating, part of the atonement he was called on to make for his dire transgressions.

This was what he felt it to be, and, encouraging the belief, each time he saw Lisbeth and observed the distance her honor and her inclination caused her to keep from him, the longing that their relations might again be what they once had been was so intensified that Clement Dunraven, as he walked rebelliously to and fro upon the earth, bearing in his heart such a seething mass of conflicting agony and remorse, could best be likened to an incarnate hell.

As the day approached for the trial, his misery increased, and so did Lisbeth's distance of manner. Beyond "Good morning," or "Good evening," they scarcely ever spoke now when they met, and yet they are going together to sit side by side in the court, and hear justice meted out according to the best inspirations of an impartial judge and jury to a man whom they both know to be absolutely innocent of the fearful crime for which he had been condemned to stand his trial.

Lady Gertrude had begged very hard to be allowed to accompany Sir Clement, but neither he nor Dr Watson would hear of such a thing.

This melancholy satisfaction being denied her, she asked Lisbeth, who would, of course, be present, to keep a watch over Sir Clement, lest the excitement and worry should make him ill.

Lisbeth promised to do this. Did she need the telling? she wondered. Would her eyes during all that dreadful day be ever removed from his face?

It was a drive of six miles to the town where the assizes were held. Lisbeth and Sir Clement were to go together in the close carriage. This was Lady Gertrude's arrangement, which Lisbeth had strenuously opposed, but the mistress of Aboyne Court would take no refusal. She said that she must have her way, and that they would be less observed than in an open carriage, and since she could not think of allowing Lisbeth to go by herself, who was a fitter individual to accompany her than Sir Clement?

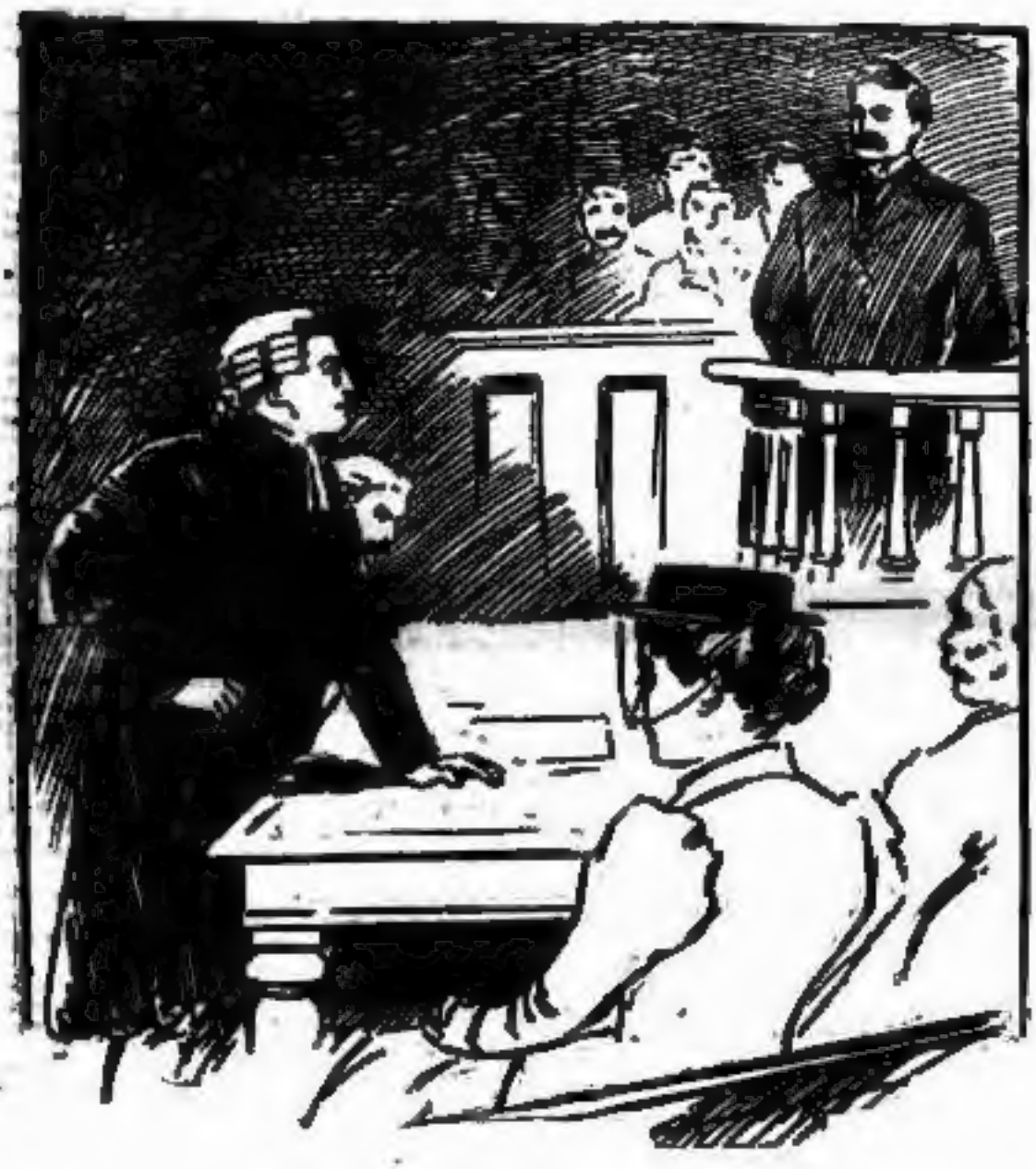
They were compelled to give in, or to seem to do so, for both naturally felt how entirely contrary to the fitness of things would be such an arrival at the court. Lady Gertrude was satisfied, and the difficulty was overcome by a seat being offered to Dr Watson, whose presence at the trial was necessary.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE MYSTERY OF CLEMENT DUNRAVEN.

BY JEAN MIDDLEMASS,

Author of "A Girl in a Thousand," "Touch and Go," "Sealed by a Kiss," "By Fair Means," etc.]



ANSELM DECLARED WHAT CLEMENT WOULD SAY.

CHAPTER XVIII.—(CONTINUED.)

Little did the garrulous doctor guess of what service his chatter was to the two beings whose relations of late had become so painfully strained. He tried to make himself even more than usually amusing and communicative, because he knew that the spirits of both these interested individuals must necessarily be depressed, but he had no idea of the gulf that lay between them, or the good little doctor would have been positively appalled at finding himself in such company.

At last the dreary drive came to an end, and they arrived at the Assize Court.

Sir Clement was offered a seat near the judge, but he refused it saying he preferred to remain with the other witnesses, an answer which rather surprised Lisbeth, as she did not until then know that Sir Clement intended to appear as a witness, and what he would say it puzzled her to think. At last all connected with the trial were assembled, and Jim Glendinning was brought into the dock between two warders.

Sir Clement had not seen him since the night of the supper at Coleshill, and he was forcibly struck by the man's changed appearance.

His eyes were sunk into his head, his face had lengthened and whitened—a change which penal servitude for attempted burglary had not effected; this horrible charge of murder had brought it about.

What had occasioned it? Not remorse, since the man, blackguard though people thought him, was absolutely innocent of this crime.

The explanation of his changed appearance was terror; this Clement Dunraven was compelled to recognise, and his feelings when he saw Jim Glendinning were of so conflicting a nature as to be indefinable.

That he, who a little more than a year ago prided himself that he would not willingly hurt a fly, should have brought sorrow and trouble on so many people through one false step was incomprehensible. It was beyond his own power to grasp that he, Clement

they was incomprehensible. It was beyond his own power to grasp that he, Clement Dunraven, reputed to be a good man and a popular member of society, should be such a villain! Why did he not stand up now and proclaim aloud:

"This man is innocent! I alone am guilty. I pushed my cousin into the water because he irritated me beyond human endurance."

He half rose with this intention, but courage failed him, and he sank back trembling and half fainting on to his seat.

Lisbeth, though her heart was palpitating wildly, was braver than he. The sight of her father's changed appearance stirred all her filial affections. She was white as death as she whispered to Clement:—

"Control yourself and be a man. Wait with patience for the verdict."

"The verdict!" he answered. "Do you think he will be condemned?"

"Be silent—for Lady Gertrude's sake," was her only reply.

Then there was again silence between them for a long space.

A well-known Q.C. had been retained for the defence of Glendinning, nominally by Lisbeth, but with money given to her for the purpose by Lady Gertrude.

He sent her two or three notes during the course of the proceedings, bidding her to be of good cheer, that the case against Glendinning was a weak one.

These notes she passed on to Sir Clement, but even he, pre-occupied though he was, could not help noticing that her hand shook so violently that she could scarcely hold them.

It was indeed a terrible position for Lisbeth, to be thus called upon to choose between husband and father, for that Clement Dunraven was in very truth her husband she never forgot during these hours of bitter trial.

If Jim Glendinning were found "Guilty," then what would happen? She dared not think.

"An innocent man must not be allowed to suffer for a guilty one, even though the criminal were Clement Dunraven."

But the man now at the bar would be acquitted. A ray of hope that all through this trying time had kept Lisbeth from being utterly prostrated in darkness and despair, did not desert her in this supreme moment. Every now and again it illuminated the blackness that lay all round, as when a heavy cloud is suddenly parted, and a streak of sunshine momentarily gladdens the gloom.

If only the formalities and the technicalities would not bar us. Would either she or Clement be able to hold out much longer?

And every now and again she gazed into his face, to see how much more endurance he had left. At last Clement Dunraven was called upon to give an account of the interview he had had with the prisoner on the evening of the storm—presumably after the death of Pierre Vaughan.

He pulled himself together with a great effort, and entered the witness-box.

That he looked distressed and haggard surprised no one, seeing that the circumstances of his cousin's death were most painful.

He took the oath, and waited for the cross-examining counsel's questions.

Lisbeth, meanwhile, took her eyes off his face, and sat with her gloveless hands clasped together so tightly as they lay in her lap that, when at last they were released, the blood moved forth.

She dreaded what he would say. That he would lessen her father's chances of escape she did not fear, but he would incriminate himself.

Standing there before the Court, his eye resting every now and again on the cringing, terror-stricken wretch at the bar, might he not, perchance, be seized with a sudden paroxysm of horror?

This was almost her dread, and who shall say that, in spite of her recent confession, love for Clement Dunraven was wholly dead in Lisbeth's heart when she allowed such thoughts as these to sway her?

She had, however, but little cause for fear.

The instinct of self-preservation was so strong in him that it was scarcely likely that he would ever betray himself, prompt his conscience ever so loudly.

He was wonderfully composed, too, considering the torture he was undergoing, but the feelings, like the brain, become automatic from constant use, and it was far more an automaton than the actual Clement Dunraven who was giving evidence in that court.

Nevertheless, for the very reason, perhaps, that it was cold and constrained, his evidence carried considerable weight.

He replied merely to the questions put, in no way glorying over anything that had passed.

The fact of her father having found the letter from Hampstead about the child, and having taken it to Clement Dunraven, was now made known to Lisbeth for the first time.

Everyone present believed what Sir Clement had told Glendinning, that the infant in question was a still-child. No imputation, then, was cast on Lisbeth's character by that statement, while it certainly influenced the jury in Glendinning's favour.

Would a man who had just committed a murder go forthwith to the nearest magistrate, unburden his father's agony of mind to him, and discuss a subject so totally irrelevant to the crime? So asked his counsel in the eloquent speech he made before the close of the proceedings, making the most of an incident which he, too, now heard of for the first time.

When Sir Clement had given his evidence, he left the court. He could no longer bear the tension of sitting there by Lisbeth's side, awaiting an issue that was so terribly vital to himself.

He would walk through the streets of the busy town, and see if the sights and sounds of active life going on its never-ending way, whatever agonies and miseries intervened, would not help him to partially forget for a while the heavy burden he had doomed himself to bear.

Yet, had he known how his absence increased Lisbeth's anxiety probably he would have gone on enduring the penance of waiting to the bitter end. From the moment she saw him leave the court by a side door, her eyes remained so fixed on that door that she forgot to look at her father's face, and when, at last, the counsels for the prosecution and defence having spoken, and the judge having summed up, the prisoner was removed, and the jury retired to consult over the verdict, Lisbeth did not even know that they were gone, but sat on as one dazed, her hands still clasped in her lap. It was Miles Berkeley who roused her from her trance.

"You must come out and have some refreshments," he said; "everyone is on the move until the court meets again."

"Where is Sir Clement?" was the question by which she answered this appeal.

As in a flash the idea seemed to come to Sir Miles that the interest Lisbeth took in Sir Clement was unusual.

Clement was amazed.

Could there be any foundation, he wondered, for the gossip of the neighborhood, that Clement loved some woman who was not his wife? Could this woman be Lisbeth Glendinning?

He replied very simply, however.

"He has gone to get a little fresh air. Come and do the same; the stuffiness of this court is most oppressive."

She followed him, because he bade her. Her feelings and power of acting for herself were temporarily blunted.

The outer air revived her, but with the revival of her senses came increased poignancy of agony.

"No," she told Sir Miles; she would have no sup or bit until the end was known. She must go back into that dreadful court and await it.

Sir Miles told her to stay where she was; the crowding in the court made the atmosphere very oppressive, and which ever way the verdict was given, she would probably faint when she heard it.

Lisbeth, however, would not listen to him.

"He is my father," she said. "He has only me, his child, in all the world; I cannot desert him now."

So they pushed their way back into the court, just as Sir Clement, turning sharply round a corner, appeared in front of the building.

Lisbeth did not speak to him, but the sight of him was no small relief, and at last, reaching her seat, she sank down into it, as the jurymen emerged from their privacy.

It was Sir Miles now who was beside her, for Sir Clement Dunraven did not come further than the door.

Jim Glendinning was once more brought into court, and stood at the old place behind the bar. Not a sound was to be heard. Even in that densely-packed crowd there was not the flutter of a rhaud, or a sigh.

Lisbeth closed her eyes. She felt so dizzy as if she were standing on the brink of a precipice. Two or three seconds—each second seemed to her a year—and the foreman of the jury pronounced the words: "Not guilty."

CHAPTER XXIV.—Scotchas, Not Killed.

A vast, bleak moor.

Far as the eye can reach scarcely a human habitation is to be seen, save here and there a few huts, where the shepherds dwell.

It is a wild day in early January; the wind is howling with portentous fury, and the snow, which already forms a thick carpet, is falling in heavy flakes.

The sheep, which in the summer graze in large numbers on these moors, are all penned comfortably in their folds, and even the shepherds, for the most part, are sitting pipe in mouth, in more sheltered spots.

Only that all-enduring mortal, the postman, is plodding along in violent contest with the opposing elements.

"Ye'll no be goin', man, across th' moors i' such weather," one of the townsfolk had said to him, on seeing him buckling on the wallet in which he carried his letters and packages.

But he replied that duty obliged him; that they had no letters at the vicarage for a week, and he must try and get across the moor.

"The parson 'ull be mazed the bother when ye're lost i' the snow. He'll no be even the lurpin' the richer."

But the man who had trudged twice a day across those moors for the last fourteen years was obstinate. He said he could find his way, and the Vicar "mons hae his letters."

The Vicarage was a good three miles from this post-office up a hill, and then down a slight incline on the other side, being sheltered from the cold winds by a knoll of trees which surrounded it and the tiny church, and also served as a protection to a few straggling cottages called the "village," in which the Vicar's immediate flock dwelt, his parish being of considerable extent, though it scarcely contained one hundred and fifty souls.

It required a man of iron constitution to be the vicar of such a place.

The Rev. Abel Singleton was exactly adapted for the work. He had been born and bred on the moors, was hardy and strong, had boasted that he had never had a day's illness in his life. His wife, however, by no means matched him in strength. She was frail and delicate, and terribly tried by the bleak aire of her northern home. In fact, she was only kept alive during the winter by having two rooms converted into hot houses, and in these she lived six months of the year a perfectly artificial existence, surrounded by books, perfumes and exotics.

It was a trial to the Vicar to have so ailing wife who could not help him in his parish duties, but that was as nothing compared with what this strong, hearty man suffered from the atmosphere of these rooms, and yet he never complained. He was devoted to his Mimi, going without necessaries for himself in order to give her the luxuries she fretfully fancied were requisites.

Many of the neighbors thought that more fresh air, and less coddling would be very beneficial to Mimi, but they did not dare suggest this to the Vicar, since to pamper Mimi was the pleasure of his life, especially as they had no children, the one infant Mimi had born him having died when it was a few weeks old.

Thus year after year the Singletons lived for each other, for they could almost count on their fingers the visitors they received.

The neighbors who occasionally chose to find fault with Mrs Singleton for being a confirmed invalid lived too far off to gladden her heart very often with whiffs of fresh air from that outer world from which they blamed her for banishing herself.

It was during one of Clement Dunraven's visits to a country house in the neighborhood, on the occasion of some winter balls, that he had heard of the Singletons, of the strange isolation of the parish, and of the lives they both led, virtually cut off from communication with their fellows.

The Vicar occasionally dined and slept at some house a few miles off, but even this was rare, as he did not care to leave his wife for long, and, moreover, he could not afford a horse and trap, so he generally had to walk with his evening clothes in a knapsack on his back.

Clement Dunraven had been struck by the tales told him about the dual solitude in which these people dwelt, because it was a mode of existence which, to him, with his different habits, seemed so utterly impossible.

When the time came that he needed a church where he could marry Lisbeth on the quiet, he thought of the lonely parish on the Yorkshire Moor, and jumped to the rash conclusion that because it was so isolated from the world there was little chance of the secret of his marriage being divulged.

It did not occur to him that in a crowded

of his marriage being divulged.

It did not occur to him that in a crowded centre the chances of discovery were far smaller, than the names of Clement Dunraven and Lisbeth Glendinning would be forgotten in the rapid current of events, while nothing that happened in the little village on the Yorkshire moor was ever forgotten.

Of course, there were tremendous odds against Mr Singleton ever meeting anyone who knew Clement Dunraven, and that he would fall in with Pierce Vaughan, the very man of all others whom the marriage most concerned, seemed next to impossible.

Yet, in these strange wayward freaks does life abound.

To return to the postman and the snowclad moor: Old Ben knew full well how precious the letters and parcels and books he carried were to the invalid, and that the Vicar frequently gave him a "tip" for bringing them so carefully.

Both these considerations, doubtless, weighed with him when he started on what was positively a perilous expedition.

Ben thought, as the Vicar also did, that he knew every inch of the moorland that lay between the Vicarage and the town; yet, for three long hours he wandered about ere he arrived at a destination which he usually reached in a quarter of the time, and the probability is that he would have lost his way altogether and been buried in the snow had not the smoke curling from the Vicarage chimneys been, so to speak, a landmark. In truth, it was the only one, for in the vast white areas that lay before trudging Ben there was not a single break.

But Ben persevered, though more than once he thought of turning back; but, dangerous though this traversing the moor in a heavy snowstorm assuredly was, Ben's last hour had not yet arrived, and he managed to surmount all obstacles, nor did he lose the letters or parcels, which were to him as a precious freight, though he little guessed what a difference in the course of events it would make whether the contents of his strong leather bag were delivered at the Vicarage or lost in an overwhelming snow-drift. By the time Ben reached the back door at the Vicarage the snow had ceased, and the mid-day sun was emitting chilly rays from between two parted clouds.

The savory smell of a steaming onion-laden stew met his nostrils as the door opened, and he felt glad he had come, especially as he heard the Vicar's voice in the yard, and knew he would be expected to partake of the appetising repast.

"Hullo, Ben! So you have got here at last! Horrible weather, my man! Come in, come in, and be warm and cosy by the kitchen fire. You have brought a heavy mail. My poor wife has been pining for news, and now she shall have it galore."

And the burly, red-faced Vicar trotted off with an armful of papers and parcels into the tropical climate that reigned behind a thick baize door. He did not even stop to change his boots or his coat, though he knew that out-of-door garments of all sorts were an abomination to Mimi. He did not, however, imagine that she would notice them now in her pleasure at the arrival of the postman, and he was right.

He even took off his hat and sat himself down to read, without any protest being offered about thick boots.

And so, while Ben was being regaled with a savory stew in the kitchen, the Vicar and his wife were enjoying an equally savory repast of a gossippy, though comely of an intellectual, character in the drawing-room. So absorbed were they in what they were reading, that for more than half an hour not a word was spoken, even by the usually garrulous Mimi.

A loud exclamation, however, at last so shocked Mrs Singleton, that she started up from her sofa:

"Abel, my poor nerves! You know I cannot bear this rough behavior."

"Dear love, forgive me. Surprise made me forget I was in your room."

"What is it, Abel?"

Mimi, like all invalids, was keenly alive to a little gossip.

"It is a trial for murder, dear. The murder of a poor fellow whom I did not know was dead!"

"An acquaintance?"

"Yes, Pierce Vaughan; the lawyer who was so civil about those titles, and to whom I sent the certificate of that strange marriage which took place here about two years ago. Do you remember?"

"Of course I do. Who has murdered him, and what for?"

The Vicar did not reply at once; he was so astounded at what he read, that words failed him.

Was it a mere coincidence that the name of the supposed murderer should be Glendinning? This was what was puzzling him so much a degree, that he did not even hear his wife's query. She repeated it fretfully after a second or two. Mimi never, if she could help it, allowed any outside interest to come between her and the Vicar. Even his works of charity in the village and on the moor had to be carried on almost surreptitiously, for fear of annoying this spoilt invalid.

"How disagreeable you are, Abel; reading in that engrossed way. Who has murdered that Mr Vaughan? Why don't you tell me?"

"My dear, how can I tell you until I have read it myself," answered the Vicar, looking up at her for half a second, and then returning with increased interest to the perusal of his paper.

Mimi, however, was by no means satisfied with his explanation.

"Just like a man," she murmured. "Men are always such a time over everything. I should have taken the cream of that newspaper column at a glance. Do give me the paper, Abel, and let me tell you all about it."

The Vicar, however, was too much absorbed to pay much heed to her words; besides, he was grasping the situation of affairs to a certain extent.

"It is inconceivable," he said, "what strange things do occur in the outer world, from which we are cut off. We ought to be thankful, eh, Mimi? Thankful that we have no contact and fellowship with the terrible condition in which three-fourths of the people live who represent society in this corrupt nineteenth century."

"For goodness sake, Abel, do not treat me to one of your homilies on the nineteenth century. You know very well that we should both be delighted to get out of this dreary place if we only had the money to turn us."

The fretful lady spoke honestly. The Vicar's remarks had been to some extent dishonest, but, good, worthy man, he strove with all his heart to be contented, and they were the outcome of his self-persuasions, that he was quite satisfied with his resting place on that dreary moor. He recognised, however, that there was truth in his wife's protest, and did not, therefore, attempt to con-

ever, that there was truth in his wife's protest, and did not, therefore, attempt to contradict her. He did not wish to irritate her further, so he told her in a few brief sentences the state of the case, as the "Morning Illuminator" revealed it, informing her that one Glendinning had been taken up for the supposed murder by drowning of Pierce Vaughan, and that it had happened in Sir Clement Dunraven's park, he himself having given witness on the occasion. Lisbeth, since she had not been a witness, was not mentioned, therefore there was absolutely no connecting link between the marriage that had taken place in the little church on the moor and the people concerned in this murder.

It was the coincidence of names that so took the Vicar aback that he could not bring himself to believe otherwise but that there was more in the matter than met the eye at a mere cursory glance.

Glendinning was by no means a common name. Why was Glendinning the supposed murderer of this Mr Vaughan? Could it be possible that the few unguarded words he himself had spoken that day in the Temple—the certificate he had afterwards sent, at Mr Vaughan's request, had brought about the murder of this unhappy man? And a cold shiver passed down the Vicar's back as these thoughts coursed through his brain, and his florid complexion lost a great portion of its usual ruddiness, for, if this were so, would he not blame himself for this man's death, since that unruly member, his tongue, had been the indirect cause? Mrs Singleton had taken up the paper which the Vicar had thrown on the table, and was devouring the account of the trial with a greed that was the result of mind starvation; hence the scrupulously conscientious Vicar had time to mould his thoughts into a block that for some long time to come would prevent him from innocently enjoying, as he had hitherto done, the pleasures and amenities of life.

If he ever succeeded in discovering the real truth of the matter, alas, for the Vicar, for would not this block become hardened to such a degree that it would never melt away out of his mind?

He did not tell his wife how much he was agitated by the perusal of that trial; he never told Mimi anything which might annoy her. She, however, was by no means so scrupulous.

She looked up from the paper, and noticed his changed expression.

"I won't have it, Abel," she cried. "I will not have it!"

"Have what, love?"

"I won't have you meddling with what does not concern me."

"How have I meddled?" he asked, as meekly as a chastised child.

"You are going to. I see it in your eyes. You are going to try and find out what these people have to do with the people you married, and it is no business of yours, my dear Abel, none whatever. It is your business to marry, and bury and christen, but not to ask questions. I should not be surprised if it is that tongue of yours, and sending the certificate to the lawyer, of whom you know very little, that has brought about this unfortunate result."

"Oh, Mimi! for God's sake don't echo my thoughts like that. I have been making myself miserable about that very certificate for the last ten minutes."

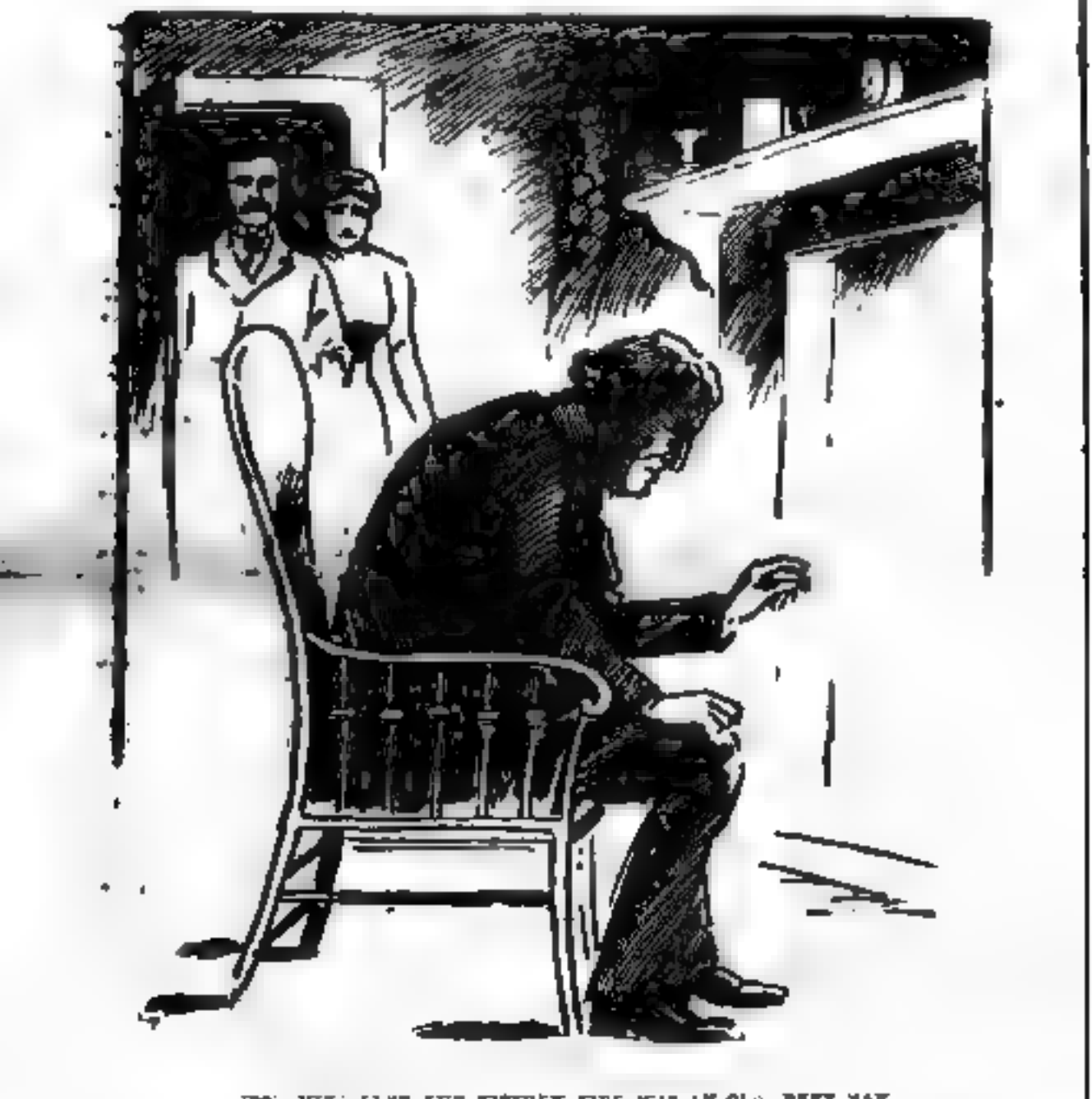
"Well, don't think about it any more, and above all, don't mix yourself up in the matter. You are not clever enough or sufficiently versed in the ways of the world to be able to cope with people who are past masters in intrigue. Pierce Vaughan is nothing to you. Just pass me the front page of the 'Times,' and let me see the births, deaths, etc."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE MYSTERY OF CLEMENT DUNRAVEN

BY JEAN MIDDLEMAS,

Author of "A Question of Honour," "Found and Lost," "Sold by a Kiss," "By Fair Means," etc.



"DO YOU KNOW FOR THE KITCHEN FIRE WAS AN OLD, BENT MAN.

CHAPTER XXIV.—(CONTINUED.)

Nothing, not even the murder of a man with whom her husband was associated, sat very heavily on Mrs Singleton. On any other subject than the "ego" she worshipped, she did not allow her thoughts to dwell for long; in that "ego" she included her husband, because her own life would have been a dreary waste without him.

She soon became too much interested in reading the fateful obituary announced in the first column of "The Times" to pay any further attention to the Rev. Abel and his troubles intensified as they were by her own anxious words.

After a short pause, during which he thought and she read, it was her turn to utter an exclamation.

"Noel Chevenix is dead."

"Ah! it is a good many years since I saw Chevenix. He was always too much of a lover to accept invitations to this dreary place. Poor Chevenix, he was a good fellow though. I am sorry to think I shall never see him again."

"I wonder if he left you any money?" said more practical Mrs Singleton.

"Money, my love! Why should he?"

"Simply because you were a relation, and he had no one very near to him."

"His sister's son will get his money," said the Vicar, and then, having delivered himself of that decision he thought no more about money, but went back to his meditations in connection with the murder, in which sad thoughts about Noel Chevenix were now occasionally mixed.

Truly, the Vicar could almost have wished that old Sam had lost his wallet in the snow, of so depressing a nature had been the morning mail. He was just considering how different everything would be in life if only this or that trifling incident occurred. How,

[illegible] saw Chevenix. He was always too much of a lover to accept invitations to this dreary place. Poor Chevenix, he was a good fellow though. I am sorry to think I shall never see him again."

"I wonder if he left you any money?" said more practical Mrs Singleton.

"Money, my love! Why should he?"

"Simply because you were a relation, and he had no one very near to him."

"His sister's son will get his money," said the Vicar, and then, having delivered himself of that decision he thought no more about money, but went back to his meditations in connection with the murder, in which sad thoughts about Noel Chevenix were now occasionally mixed.

Truly, the Vicar could almost have wished that old Sam had lost his wallet in the snow, of so depressing a nature had been the morning mail. He was just considering how different everything would be in life if only this or that trifling incident occurred. How,

[illegible] everything would be [illegible] only [illegible] Now, [illegible] on the [illegible] side of [illegible] the sight frequently changes the [illegible] of a whole [illegible], [illegible] and the [illegible] brought in a letter.

"It had been overlooked [illegible] the wallet," she [illegible].

He opened it with indifference. The hand-writing was unknown to him, and he felt as if he [illegible] enough news for the time being.

At any other time his [illegible] a jubilant expression as he [illegible]. The [illegible] letter had brought was [illegible].

"There, Abel, you see I was right. I told you [illegible] would leave you some money. Five thousand pounds. Now you will be able to [illegible]. You are a [illegible] to the [illegible], and [illegible] for the [illegible], though what a [illegible]?"

"I suppose so, dear. But I don't know. Anyway, we must start off abroad just yet."

"But you will take me!"

"[illegible], I promise, [illegible] unforeseen [illegible]."

For the rest of the day [illegible] of nothing but her promised [illegible] "the [illegible] dream of, not to tell," by which she expected to be [illegible].

The [illegible] meanwhile, pondered over the [illegible] to the [illegible], which are [illegible] he would be [illegible] if possible, to [illegible] on the [illegible] of a Glendinning having been accused of the murder of Pierce Vaughan.

He would see this [illegible] if it were possible, and find out what he had to tell.

CHAPTER [illegible]

Not only on the Yorkshire [illegible] had the weather been severe, but for some weeks the whole of England had been snow-bound, and even in the more [illegible] where [illegible] was situated, the weather had been [illegible] severity.

All hunting [illegible] had been [illegible] for many [illegible] weeks, [illegible] had been put off [illegible] of the country houses, and where there was a large house party very [illegible] with a [illegible] effect on [illegible].

Lady [illegible] was one of the [illegible]. [illegible] Lady [illegible], who was ever so happy as when she was entertaining her friends, the only [illegible] to her present pleasure being that [illegible], were very few and far [illegible], and [illegible] from all [illegible] with her neighbours, she could not discuss the late trial, and find out what the general opinion was about Jim Glendinning's release.

The [illegible] [illegible] did arrive [illegible] by [illegible] in considering the verdict to be [illegible] just.

"There [illegible] of the [illegible] against the [illegible] man," they said, "and were [illegible] for his [illegible] evidence, he would not have been [illegible]."

All this was very well, and Lady [illegible] had no doubt they were quite right, still, she would have liked further details, and felt [illegible] with the [illegible], which, [illegible] as it did, the very day of the [illegible] as if it had come purposely to [illegible] her.

But if Lady [illegible] was annoyed by the [illegible] of neighbourly [illegible], [illegible] those who were [illegible] for it, [illegible] them a [illegible] during which they

(3780)

could, to a degree, recover their mental equilibrium.

Well was it for Clement Donovan that for a time he could remain within his own domain without suffering [illegible] observation as his [illegible] to [illegible] and such as [illegible] to watch his change [illegible] Lady Gertrude, who thoroughly believed in him, if she did not altogether understand him. How could she, when the [illegible] of his [illegible] would vary from one to [illegible] and [illegible] again in the course of an hour. He had received from Jim Glendinning's trial [illegible] so [illegible], so delighted, that he was like a madman in his wild joy. Not only had the falsely-accused man been set at liberty, but the general opinion was that Pierce Vaughan must for some purpose have been stretching after something in the lake, and have been carried into it by the force of the storm.

He was free, free! And so exultant was Clement at the thought of his own freedom that for a time he forgot to be [illegible]. He whistled and sang as he went about the house, as he had never done since his marriage. He tossed the baby boy about until the nurse was afraid for its fragile limbs. He [illegible] Lady Gertrude every now and again so [illegible] that she could not understand why all of a sudden, because Jim Glendinning had been found "Not Guilty," he should have begun to love her so desperately. Of course, she was very glad of the issue of the trial, but it did not affect her to [illegible], and for the first twenty-four hours after it was over she found herself [illegible] in the [illegible] way he was so [illegible] happy.

Poor little woman, she was destined to be still further perplexed by Sir Clement's strange behaviour when, the first excitement about his supposed freedom over, the reaction set in.

The despair, the agony of mind from which he suffered, was increased tenfold by his having passed through such a paroxysm of wild joy.

[illegible] Jim Glendinning had been set at liberty [illegible] according to Sir Clement [illegible] thereby, [illegible] for him to make his [illegible] known. He had readily jumped at the conclusion that he had [illegible] punishment—punishment and public [illegible] being, he thought, [illegible].

In the [illegible] which he at first felt when [illegible] Glendinning's acquittal, he was the more certain that [illegible] at last, in the [illegible] joy [illegible] the [illegible], and [illegible] Donovan knew that happen [illegible] might, [illegible] of love, he would never be a happy man again.

That though his sufferings might never be [illegible] by the [illegible] of the law, he would [illegible] in his own [illegible]

heart, and that under no sun for on the earth though he might until he was heavy-headed and sat with age, he could never be free from the terrible punishment which would follow him ruthlessly.

At times he managed to pull himself together, and reason rationally, and face with some show of decorum the requirements of every day life, but there were no more outbursts of merry delight; that short summer madness was over, and the [illegible] had set in with an intensity that was no severe as that which now lay heavily raging on the earth.

No wonder that Lady Gertrude was puzzled and anxious at the change it had come over him, especially at times when terror so overcame him that he would start up, a frantic look of horror on his face, and start with craven fear at every shadow.

Not but bravely relieved those abject fits of dread, and Lady Gertrude, growing to expect them like the recurrence of day, and evening to a boy off a piece of the fairy legend, thought she had at last read the riddle.

Clement, her cousin, doubted Clement had taken to drinking!

It was a terrible revelation, and shocked her to such a degree that it revived in my her vitality and mind, in one moment, years on to her life.

Yet she was mistaken. Clement Dunsmore was no drunkard. He fought bravely with his conscience. It was only when despair was dragging him down to the very depths that he had recourse to opium, and then simply for Lady Gertrude's sake, that she might not see how utterly he mastered he was. He would not have her know in the world he would not, if he could help it, shew the very smallest to mar her peace and purity. It was no easy matter, though, to keep her happy and ignorant, considering that she was his wife, or believed herself to be so.

If only he could tell some one of his agony, confess his crime to some sympathetic human being, he felt he should then be better able to bear his burden. But to whom? Not to Lady Gertrude, since it was the chief object of his [illegible] not a moment from her.

Only in Lisbeth! There was no one else—perhaps the whole wide world where he could trust but the woman who had already suffered so much for him.

And he knew she faithfully supposed to secrecy, or had she guarded her knowledge with utmost discretion, for certainly Clement Dunsmore had no idea that Lisbeth already guessed that he was not wholly innocent of Pierre Vaughan's death. That they had quarrelled and wrestled and that Pierre had fallen accidentally into the water was what she believed, and then she prayed Clement, shielded him in her heart because she thought he was the victim of an unfortunate chance.

At last the days came, and the maids and boys, though diligent and neat and clean, were lazy enough, and as it was the case, the weather, from morning to night, suddenly passed into autumnal coldness.

Communication with the other world would henceforth be restored, and the Clement resolved to make the first use of his emancipation by paying a visit to Lisbeth's cottage.

There was no reason now to hide his visits from Lady Gertrude, since she had been urging him for some days to try and go down to her, for they had heard of some sickness of Lisbeth's among the poor. She needed Clement depart by the cottage, telling him as he did so to tell Lisbeth come to her soon, or she would be obliged to brave the elements and go herself to see her.

For Lady Gertrude, too, had designs on Lisbeth's person. She felt that among all the women she knew, Nurse Dobson excepted, Lisbeth was the only individual she could trust, or in whose company she had any special faith. She intended to tell her, and her only, what she suspected she had found out about the Clement, and ask her advice as to what could be done to check it.

So Clement strode along with a bright step. He had been house-bound for so long, only twice able to get out to the terrace, where the snow had been cleared, or into the garden yard, that, in spite of his heavy trouble, the fresh air revived him, and made him feel more cheerful than he had done for days.

He was already beginning to wonder and think it would be impertinent to make any confidences even of Lisbeth.

He remembered some definition about a secret that he had once come upon in an old French book, where, to explain a secret was simply described as, "To give to another individual an example of indiscretion." No, he would try to suffer in silence a little longer. Lisbeth was always there if his misery became too heavy for him to bear.

He would go and see all the same. He was longing for a sight of her honest face, for that she would look honest and bright and that her father was free he did not doubt.

From the window of an upper room where Lisbeth was tending Nurse Green, who had been ill for the last few days, she saw Clement Dunsmore coming along the lane, and her heart sank within her.

Why did she always feel sure that it would be a misery if she ever took on his face again? She loved him—yes, she loved him, as no other man on earth could ever take his place in her heart, and yet, if she could only take little Lisa in her arms and go away where she would never see or hear of him again, she felt that it would be a relief. Was he coming there now, thinking everything between them would be as it was before? Would he expect her to let him press his hand, perhaps fold her to his heart, as he had done on that never-to-be-forgotten evening, and so very many months ago? If he did what should she do or say? She could not tell him that love was dead. Would it be true?

No—no—no—a thousand times, no. She would still give up her life for Clement Dunsmore's happiness, if he would only remain true to Lady Gertrude, and be her true husband.

Happy, ignorant Lady Gertrude! how she envied her her perfect faith in the Clement! How she would never forget in her daily prayers to ask that this faith in him might never be misplaced.

And while these thoughts were passing in her perturbed brain, the Clement was coming nearer and nearer to the cottage.

He had already passed through the garden gate, and was close by the porch, but Lisbeth did not move from her place by the window until Nurse Green, who had heard the click of the opening gate, asked who had come in.

Lisbeth answered, shortly

"Mr Clement Dunsmore."

"Oh! I am so glad you have gone quickly, Lisa, and get things of Lady Gertrude's, in case a long stay is found."

"Please keep Lisa, then. Mr Clement does not care for children, except the little baby."

there was a bitterness in the tone of the last words which Nurse Green would not have failed to notice had she been a shrewder woman.

Lisbeth told Lisa on the bed where the old woman was lying, and went slowly down to receive Sir Clement.

"Ah, Lisbeth," he said, extending a short-sleeved hand and foot, "Lady Gertrude insisted on my coming through the wood to inquire after you."

Lisbeth prayed night and day that he might keep true to Lady Gertrude, nevertheless, it jarred upon her that it should be necessary for him to frame an excuse about coming to see her.

She did not reply, but opened the garden door, then quietly inviting him to enter.

He felt somewhat taken aback by her manner. Was she always going to be frigid with him now, as she had been while the suspense about that terrible trial hung over them?

"You do not look happy, Lisbeth. I expected to see you brighter now."

"Can I ever be bright again, Sir Clement? I am surprised that you should expect it."

"Don't call me Sir Clement, Lisbeth; am I not always Clem to you?"

"Circumstances have parted us. It is best that the distance should not be narrowed."

"Lisbeth! If you are going to fail me what will my life be worth? I shall never be able to endure it."

"You have Lady Gertrude. She loves you dearly, and oh, Clement, if you have any honour left, be true to her!"

"You need not remind me of my duty to Lady Gertrude. I love her too well to be unkind. I married her, as you know, chiefly to please my uncle, but her gentleness, her trust, her devotion, have won for her a very prominent place in my heart. Still, believe me, Lisbeth, Lady Gertrude is not you. She can never be to me what you have been—will never be."

A smile passed for a moment over Lisbeth's face. What woman, noble and brave though she may be, does not feel gratified at hearing that, in spite of separation, she still retained the first place in the heart of the man she has once madly loved. She would be more than human if she did.

The next moment, however, her pleasure was mingled with distrust. He would not come to her unless he wanted help. But she did not answer the appeal impetuously. She still loved him too well to reward him if she could help it. Still she allowed him to see that she understood.

"I will never wholly desert you, Clement," she replied, almost solemnly. "If I believe there is anything to be done that I can do, you may trust me, for your own sake and Lady Gertrude's."

"Always Lady Gertrude's! It seems strange, but it is I instead of you who am jealous of Lady Gertrude.

"Let you stand between us?"

"Come, come, Lisbeth—do not let us talk of her as all. Let us leave her out of the question. Promise to be true to me as the future, as you have been in the past, and whatever befalls be my firm friend."

"Such a promise binds me to unutterable ruin," she said. "I have been true to you in desperate need, and, knowing it as you do, Clement Dunraven, you have no right to doubt what I shall be in the future."

And such a fierce light came into her luminous eyes, that Sir Clement quailed beneath it, and for the first time he began to wonder how much she knew.

He had intended only a few hours ago to make a full confession to her: still, he did not care to expose the subject now that he had been brought to the very verge, and because he was afraid she would betray him, but because he was afraid of her condemnation.

But he must hear his punishment alone, and in silence, he decided, as he turned away from her, and looked out into the garden. The words she would speak if she knew all would cut too keenly for him to be able to bear them.

When, having finished his evening contemplation of the garden, he looked round at her again it was to ask a commonplace question about the health of Nurse Green.

She answered him, and they talked on in different subjects for a little while, the constraint and the agony of mind they had both endured while it was going on were never even alluded to.

Altogether the interview left him so ashamed that it scarcely seemed probable that Sir Clement would frequently repeat his visit.

At last he said he must go, and that if Lisbeth would let him out by the back door he would try the path through the wood. It would, he thought, be pleasanter walking than by the muddy lane.

To do this he must necessarily pass through the kitchen.

She was about to refuse, then an unusual thought she decided that people should see their own course. Except to an occasional crackling over the kitchen fire, was an all hush now.

He started up when he heard footsteps, and scrambled on to his feet.

Clement Dunraven uttered a cry of horror and dismay. The old man was Jim Gleadhill, the miser, followed by sudden and unexpected release, had died. After an apoplectic seizure he had become a gibbering imbecile.

CHAPTER XXVI.—Consolation Manor.

The winter had been short but sharp. There was no "lingering to chill the lap of May."

By the end of April Alwyn Court and the surrounding country were looked its loveliness, and blossoms and verdure were beginning to make the face of Nature beautiful.

In all external meaning, green retired in those quiet grades, but "Peace, oh, Virtue, peace is all things ours," and the outward seeming of harmonious calm was entirely in unison with the inner feelings of more than one of the dwellers in that fair and lovely country.

No incident of startling importance had occurred since the trial. Elvira Delmar was slowly recovering, but, much to Mr Delmar's regret, Dr Watson said she must go abroad for some time, and have a thorough change. John Bell that he was, he hated the idea of foreign travel, and was really relieved when Lady Marian said that nothing would suit her better than a year abroad, and that if he liked she would accompany Elvira.

They were to start the first week of May, and the afternoon being a lovely one, they have driven over together to Alwyn Court to bid Lady Gertrude good-bye.

It was Elvira's first visit there since it was known that Thora Vaughan had been drowned in the lake. With renewed strength, she no longer takes the same morbid view of life as before, and she has laid aside the embroidery work which she had elected to wear in the first instance for a malingered purpose, by which means Lady Gertrude's sympathy

THE MYSTERY OF CLEMENT DUNRAVEN

BY JEAN MIDDLEMASS,

Author of "Amid the Tempest," "Tom and Dick," [illegible] "Sir Felix Monro," etc.

CLEMENT'S LAST LOOK AT THE MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.

CHAPTER XXVI.—(Continued.)

A very sad expression came over Lady Gertrude's face as Elvira spoke. What had changed her beloved Clement puzzled her as much as anyone, especially as of late she had put the fancy about the drinking out of her mind, partly because he had given up taking brandy, and partly because Lisbeth had assured her that she was quite certain that Sir Clement was no drunkard.

"Yes, Clement is changed," she said. "He has never been [redacted] since that terrible time. I think it would do him good to get away, if I could only persuade him to wind up the affairs and let us be off."

"Who takes Poor Pierre's money?" asked Lady Marcia.

"Well, he does. There was no will, and he says he cannot bear to touch it, so day after day things drift on, and nothing is done. But I think I have got him to promise to go to town next week, look over the papers and give up the Temple chambers. Griffin has written to say he has got a situation, that he does not like to impose any longer on Sir Clement's bounty. So he must do something."

"What a good thing. Keep him up to it, Gertrude. It is always best to let bygones be bygones, and forget miseries."

Of course it was cheery Lady Marcia who spoke; Elvira was crying behind her veil.

Lady Gertrude saw this, and thought it was time to change the conversation.

"Would you not like to see the boy?" she asked. "He is such a jolly little fellow, just six months old to-day."

Both the ladies expressed a strong wish to see him, and the bell was rung for the hair. Sir Clement coming into the [redacted] quaintest of the child, [redacted] became much more lively, and no further reference was made to the unhappy subject of Pierre Vaughan's demise. When, at [redacted] Lady Marcia and Elvira Delane took their leave, they [redacted] the carriage by Sir Clement, who himself told them that he was going to town to settle some business, and hoped later that perhaps he and Lady

(379)

[illegible] had [illegible] up more to give any information, and he was not likely to throw away his chances simply to please Mr Singleton, who had evidently come there [illegible] asking questions, those inquiries being at once ordered by the shrewd Griffin as "monkey curiosity."

Beyond what had appeared in the newspapers, Griffin had [illegible].

"Who was Jim Glendenning?"

That was what Mr Singleton wished to know.

"An ex-convict," was the reply, "who seemed to be interfering about the grounds. He was always [illegible] of Mr Vaughan's death," which Griffin feared was beginning to look very [illegible].

Mr Singleton, finding there was but little to be got out of Griffin, and the man's manner being [illegible], said he should very much like to see the Chestnut Cheesecake where he was to be found?

Then Griffin, for the first time, made a slip in his resolve to tell nothings. He subconsciously [illegible] that the Chestnut Cheesecake had been there that day, and would be there again to-morrow; that he was starting up his coach's wheels.

Probably Griffin would not have acknowledged this much had not the Chestnut asked about Mr Singleton, and he therefore thought that perhaps he would like to see him.

Mr Singleton expressed his regret that he had missed the Chestnut, and said he would call again on the morrow about twelve, when he hoped to be lucky enough to find him.

Then he took his leave, and Griffin returned to his endless [illegible], with the result of which the world was [illegible].

After awhile he put it away, and decided that he would go out and get something to eat, and as the Chestnut had said that he should not return, he would look up and go home to Wandsworth, where he lived with his mother.

Just as he was preparing to leave, somewhat to his surprise, the Chestnut came back.

"I have been talking to the lawyer, Griffin, and on my way back I thought I would look in and tell you something in which we are agreed. We both feel certain that if my poor cousin had left a will you would not have been forgotten, and, therefore, a deed of gift is to be drawn up, giving you two thousand pounds."

"Two thousand pounds, sir Chestnut!" I am quite sure Mr Vaughan would not have left me all that, even if he had left me anything."

This spontaneous remark made the Chestnut smile, since it showed that, devoted though Griffin was to his master, he was fully sensible of his good nature.

"Never mind, Griffin," he said. "Two thousand is not too much for you. You have had a lot of worry lately."

"I am sure I am deeply indebted to you, sir Chestnut. My poor dear mistress will now be able to have [illegible] I could not give her before."

Tears of gratitude rose into the eyes of the humble little man.

The Chestnut, too, was gratified, and he was more pleased with himself for having arranged this, than he had felt for months.

Short [illegible], however, was to be the Chestnut's pleasure in the future.

He shook hands with Griffin, and told him he hoped the money would bring him happiness and comfort.

It was in the midst of Griffin's effusive thanks [illegible].

"Oh, I forgot, Sir Chestnut, to tell you I met with my own rabbit delight at the rather [illegible] again, and—Mr Singleton has been very [illegible]."

Chestnut Cheesecake grimaced as he asked:

"What did he want?"

It was not always possible for him to subdue all outward visible signs of emotion.

"Not much; but he calls his customary, I expect. He wishes to see you, and will call to-morrow at twelve, on the chance."

"All right. He will not get much out of me. Good day, Griffin. I have an appointment, and shall be late."

He was downstairs before Griffin had time to remember his temper, and was driving to [illegible].

"Parliament is summoned. By twelve to-morrow I shall be anywhere over the Tropic." He jumped into a hansom and drove off to his club in St. James's street. There was a telegram for him in the hall. It was from Lady [illegible].

"Come home at once; baby very ill."

The Chestnut did not [illegible] much about the baby's illness, [illegible] but it was the end [illegible] to Griffin, telling him [illegible] to return home at once, and did not know when he should return; that he thought he had made all necessary arrangement (Griffin could do the rest. He was to close out the rooms, and the furniture to a dealer, as they had decided, and give up the [illegible].

In a postscript, he added:—

"Of course, I need not say, do not mention [illegible] matters, and do not send anyone to me, especially while this trouble is hanging over us."

When Mr Singleton called next day it was to be disappointed at the morning with the Chestnut, and to be even compelled to return to Yorkshire to take his Sunday duty, the investigation of this matter must be, for the present, postponed.

He had, however, enjoyed a long interview for the time, during which he was to make [illegible] as he promised very shortly.

Before they started he would again be in town, and would make another effort to solve the mystery.

CHAPTER XXVII.—AT THE SUNSET

Sir Miles Bunbury's place was by no means an [illegible] in Bedfordshire, and could in [illegible] in comparison with other [illegible] as Abbeyne Court, but it was counted to be full of great beauty. It went by the homely and comfortable name of the "Rookery," and all the appointments and [illegible] were in perfect harmony with the name.

Sir Miles Bunbury was much too thorough a man of the [illegible] to care for show, but he loved [illegible] for himself, and gave it when ever he could to others.

The housekeeper, who had been in the [illegible] when he was a little boy, nursed him, and [illegible] manner, she was of the [illegible] up [illegible] with to reign supreme over the [illegible] contingent of the Rookery, and always said that there was only one thing wanting to make the place perfect, and [illegible] was a children. The visitors, however, [illegible] were long in coming, and it seemed like good old times that a date so determined to be [illegible] as Sir Miles did not marry. Some-

He forgave her everything, however, for her wish to see him married to Elvira Dubois. He put his arm round the old woman's neck and kissed her, as he had not kissed her for many a day.

"We'll see about it, good old Bett, we'll see about it. I have no objection, but Miss Dubois may not be willing."

"Not willing to marry such a nice gentleman as you! Not willing to come and live in this dear Hungary, instead of that cold, wet [illegible]! Why, I went to see with the housekeeper three nice here ago, and I was sad worry for a month after. Your young lady, she's here, very ill, sir, I hear. It's either chills she's got from being there, or may be it's grievin' after you, Sir Miles, as is worryin' her."

He shook his head.

"I don't think so, Bett. I wish I did, but as I said before, I'll see what can be done—perhaps here—" and he walked away, not trusting that he could stand any further over any of his feelings. He had, however, gratified the old woman's heart, and she did not mind his going into the library and shutting the door.

Once there, he threw himself down in an arm-chair and remained very still for a long time. Old Bett's remarks had stirred his heart to its utmost depths. Most truly Elvira Dubois was going abroad with Lady Matilda Fergusson for some time. Should he let her go without a word from him? Now that Fleur Vaughan was dead, he had no rival in her affections, and as much time as possible had passed since that event, there could be nothing inharmonious in making a formal proposal.

"Poor Bett never was fair lady." He would write—undecided to think of speaking to her—she would only bid him before he had barely opened his mouth. She seemed to know by intuition what was coming. Decidedly a letter was best, and in it he would implore her to give him a straightforward answer. He turned his chair round to the writing table, and took out a sheet of his very best paper. A sheet! A whole quire was wasted before he found adequate words in which to express his feelings for Elvira.

At last a letter was composed to his satisfaction, and despatched to Bellegrande by special messenger, he would not commit it to the post.

A message came back that Miss Dubois would send an answer.

Till that answer came Sir Miles was on tenterhooks, and it was three days in arriving. Elvira did not wish him to receive it until she was out of England.

It ran as follows:—

"Dear Sir Miles,—

"Your letter has distressed and pleased me. Still it was a task set on your part to write it. Are we not friends? Have we not made a strong and firm friendship? Why do you assail friendship and my love by seeking to change it? I have been ill, and I am likely to think about matrimony, and I have been grateful to you for many kindnesses done from a distance, and much thoughtfulness of my unnerved condition. What I am to say now that you have suddenly overthrown these evidences of trust, I do not know. Shall I be very angry and dismiss your friendship altogether, or shall I say some almost—love us—put pure—and say whether I am really and seriously so displeased that I shall decline to

THE

MYSTERY OF CLEMENT DUNRAVEN.

BY JEAN MIDDLEMAS

[illegible]

CHAPTER XXVII.—(Continued.)

Not for months—all through that cheerless, dismal winter, fraught as it had been with [illegible] [illegible] as he did to-day. And as he rode up to Alceyne Court he wondered whether he [illegible] of [illegible] that the worst was over, and whether he would regard Elvira's letter, about which he intended to tell him, but not to show it, in the same [illegible].

"Is Sir Clement at home?"

[illegible] apparently reflected that Sir Miles was a very [illegible] of the family, [illegible] into the library, having called a groom [illegible].

[illegible]

He jumped up [illegible] to see Sir Miles, and [illegible] eagerly forward to greet him, pressing his outstretched hand [illegible].

Sir Clement had a strong affection for Miles [illegible], who had proved himself to be his friend on more than one occasion. To what extent he would remain so, did he know all, Sir Clement did not dare to conjecture, still he felt that if any man would befriend him and he [illegible] that [illegible].

[illegible]

For a second or two he received no answer. Clement walked to the window, and looked out [illegible] to speak. [illegible]

"The child [illegible] dying."

[illegible]

"It is a bad [illegible]. He has had two [illegible] convulsions. [illegible] it is not for myself I care so much—I deserve it—but poor Gertie—what has she done?"

[illegible]

[illegible]

"[illegible] you must pull yourself together and not give way like this. [illegible] have been overtaxed of late—[illegible]"

[illegible]

"I will ride down and see if I can't persuade Lisbeth to come. She will be the greatest comfort to Lady Gertrude, and she is so practical, such a good nurse, perhaps she may pull the child through. Come, cheer up, man."

"Thanks, so many," said the wretched Clement, then clinging to Sir Miles as though he were his only friend, he asked, You will come back, won't you? It is hard to wish anyone to be [illegible]

[illegible]

And as [illegible] thoughts were [illegible] that had come upon his friend.

Jim Glendinning was sitting in the porch, smoking and enjoying the sunshine, when Sir Miles rode up to the door.

"[illegible] Lisbeth?" asked the farmer.

[illegible] of the house.

He seldom spoke now, but he knew to a certain extent what was going on, and as regarded Sir Miles, though probably it would have been difficult to him to have [illegible].

[illegible] but she came at once when Sir Miles called.

[illegible] For Lisbeth considered that she had fully done her duty to the [illegible] of Alceyne Court, and that for [illegible] she was justified in drawing the line at the little heir, of whom she did not hesitate to acknowledge to herself that she was exceedingly jealous. "If I am to be sent for every time that baby is cutting a tooth [illegible]. No, I will not go."

So she decided.

And when Sir Miles said, "I have come to fetch you; Lady Gertrude is very much in need of you," she interrupted him—

"I cannot go, they must nurse their sick baby themselves. I have been away too much from my work here. It is too much to expect me to come every time the child cuts a tooth."

And in this strain she continued without stopping for some little time.

Sir Miles had never heard her talk like this before, or seen her so excited, nor could he understand why she should do so.

He, of course, did not know that jealousy of the baby heir was rending this mother's heart until it was turning her hardly so [illegible]. He let her say her say for awhile, thinking she would thereby expend her irritation, for he could not help seeing that, whatever the cause, she was irritated against the [illegible]. Then he said, speaking very quietly—

"[illegible] the child is in [illegible] danger. He has had two [illegible] [illegible]."

Like magic [illegible] she forgot all her jealousy, all her annoyance, that this child should have her Lam's place.

[illegible] of Lady Gertrude's [illegible] down with the grief she knew so well would wholly overcome her.

"I will go at once," she said, [illegible] she was at work. The [illegible] [illegible] that she would [illegible].

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] She asked [illegible] to ride back and say she was coming, and then once more she left the cottage in [illegible]'s charge, an office which the old woman always readily undertook when Lady Gertrude was in question, and started off for the Court through the wood, which was the shortest way.

The hall door was open, and Dr Watson's carriage was waiting there. Merely saying "[illegible] morning" to the butler, Lisbeth passed into the house.

The servants had become so accustomed to her comings and goings of late, that they almost regarded her as one of the family.

She turned into the library. There was no one there, as she went on upstairs towards the nursery [illegible] Lisbeth, on account of her [illegible] of the boy, had never [illegible] standing in the passage watching and waiting. He did not speak to Lisbeth when he saw her coming, but opened the door for her to pass into the room.

Just as he did so there was a wild cry.

The baby heir was dead, and it was into Lisbeth's arms [illegible] Lady Gertrude fell, fainting.

CHAPTER XXVIII. — IN MERCY HAVE MERCY.

Punishment for Clement Devereux could, he thought, go no further [illegible] his [illegible].

[illegible] he was [illegible] disappointed that the boy should have died — the boy who he hoped would one day succeed him and become a [illegible], but the [illegible] was not [illegible] to the [illegible] as Lady Gertrude's was. That [illegible] was very [illegible] It was so strong that he suffered [illegible].

She was very quiet and uncomplaining, "resigned to the will of Heaven," she said, but for all that she was fading away from very grief and each day grew paler and thinner.

Poor Gertrude, who could not be Clement Devereux's equal [illegible] during her [illegible] of woe. [illegible] she seemed to have no earthly more sympathy for his [illegible] than even Lisbeth did, and yet Lisbeth [illegible] helped him in [illegible], whereas Lady [illegible] was ignorant even of the [illegible].

[illegible] but tried to go about her daily avocations as usual, after the poor little baby was buried.

[illegible] the grief that does not speak
Whispers the [illegible] heart and bids it break.

Every evening she took a basket of white flowers and strewed them on the tiny grave, herself as white and fragile as the rare exotics she [illegible] on the earth.

[illegible] that went on and then came a day when—the churchyard being [illegible] from the house—she fainted on her return, and Dr Watson said that the walks must be discontinued. In fine weather she [illegible] to the [illegible] garden, but [illegible] Dr Watson [illegible] of [illegible] Lady Gertrude [illegible] all she saw her darling lain.

As [illegible] Lady [illegible] became a grave, it was Lisbeth who went in her place.

She thought she owed some reparation for the coldness she had felt about the poor wee [illegible] and her [illegible] was considerably increased by the knowledge that [illegible] she had more than once [illegible] wished him dead.

The lovely month of June was now come, filling the whole country side with foliage, fragrance and roses, yet neither to the [illegible] of [illegible] nor to her who was so deeply connected to both these loves, did a [illegible] gladness.

[illegible] Clement worried about having life a [illegible]. Lady Gertrude seemed to be slowly [illegible] away from life, and to grow weaker and whiter every day when Lisbeth went to see her. She had never wept before at the thought that but for her how different it would all have been.

As for [illegible], cheery Dr Watson, he was [illegible]. He hated the sight of trouble and suffering, and for that very reason, so he himself said, he devoted all his time to a desperate endeavour to stem [illegible] "the [illegible] of misery," as he forcibly called [illegible] was [illegible] and he was [illegible].

He had patched up Elvira Delane to a certain extent and sent her off abroad [illegible] he had [illegible] to have a [illegible] when he [illegible] a happy [illegible]. But the death of the little heir of Abergue Court had upset all his calculations and the little doctor's equanimity so completely that he was at his wits' end.

[illegible] he could combat as bravely as most men, he thought, but not mental suffering — that was out of his province. It wanted a [illegible] good friend Lisbeth, and see if she could not help him.

With all his acumen Dr Watson had failed to discover how very closely Lisbeth was mixed up with these troubles he wanted her to help in dispersing, and thus it was not merely, as he supposed, the [illegible] had [illegible] looked in at the cottage to see how Jim [illegible] was, and to give him a tonic or any little thing that he thought would better his [illegible].

He would go there now, he decided, one very hot day, when he had found Lady Gertrude more inert and prostrate than usual.

Blossoming was sitting, as he generally was, in the porch. He seemed pretty well, [illegible] Watson went on to the kitchen [illegible] he [illegible] Lisbeth [illegible] or [illegible] in some other [illegible] the [illegible] her hands would [illegible].

The doctor had never seen her break down before — she had a [illegible].

There was not much use in coming to her for help if she had caught the epidemic, too, he thought.

"Tut, tut, tut, what is all this, Lisbeth?" he asked, "for goodness sake do not say anything has gone wrong."

She started up at the sound of his voice.

"[illegible]," she said, "nothing fresh has happened. I am sorry you have caught me like this, but I feel terribly depressed. A good [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] if I can do? You know I am always ready to do anything for you. You have been very good to me."

"Good girl, good girl, I knew you would help. It is Lady Gertrude I am worrying about."

[illegible]

[illegible] no matter what. Bring her here, and let her amuse the baroness. Take Lisa up there for a day or two; she is an intelligent, 'fetching' little child. I should not wonder if Lady Gertrude took to her; perhaps she will adopt her. The child has no parents, I think you said, at all events, no one knows who they are."

While he spoke, Lisbeth stood gasping as if for breath, then the words came out in a rush.

"Good God, can you [illegible] you are talking abo[illegible]

[illegible] whom he had been puzzled more than once, was Lisbeth's child. Who the father was, Dr Watson did not dare think, and he at once determined to put the contemplation of it away for the present, as too perplexing to be indulged in while he was wanted on other matters.

He could not help thinking, though, that [illegible] which he had arrived.

[illegible] served.

She muttered something about "poor people's children having no place in a house like Abeyne Court," and that it was absurd to think that any other child would be to Lady [illegible]

[illegible] she felt Dr Watson knew that more lay behind her excuses than it was convenient [illegible] husband could be better trusted [illegible] than Dr Watson [illegible] was another self-reproach added to the [illegible] that she had not better guarded her tongue [illegible]

"Then you cannot help me with Lady [illegible]" he asked [illegible] thus waiving the subject of Lisa.

"I will help you all I can," she answered. "I told you so before. My advice is get her away from the Court, and Mr. Clement, too. It is full of sad memories for them both. What have they to do there but wonder about graves, which they both had better forget. [illegible] join Miss Deleas and Lady Maude, it would do her a world of good."

[illegible] do her a world of good.

The doctor laughed. [illegible]

[illegible]

"There is only one way to do it. Lady [illegible]

"Thanks for the hint. [illegible] I really must retire! [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] the doctor, was not married, and many of the patients held him that a doctor without a wife was an anomaly not to be tolerated. Whether they would be very [illegible] Watson he did not consider. He him- [illegible] a proposal from the little doctor to [illegible]

[illegible] and there was a deeper flush than usual as [illegible] porch where Jim Glendinning was still [illegible]

[illegible] and smile to the favourite woman who had awakened such a tender [illegible]

She remained very still until the doctor was out of sight, and then she heaved a [illegible] might have been [illegible]

"The thing that might have been
Is called and questioned why it hath not been;
And, can it give good reason [illegible]
Besides the actual, and [illegible]
To fill the empty gaps of life."

Yes, she would have been a happy woman as Dr Watson's wife. But that could never [illegible]

[illegible] side her dreams and returned to the actual. She bent over the man, aged and enfeebled before his time, and kissed him on the brow.

Lisbeth had grown very tender to her father of late. Whatever his transgressions in the past [illegible]

past, and that he had been most injuriously dealt with, and that no amount of petting and pentinence could recompense the fearful sufferings he had undergone. Owing chiefly to her good nursing and loving care, Jim Grandtuning had been much better of late, and there were times when fitful gleams of intelligence would come to him, as when a few rays of sunshine fall athwart the darkness of a winter's day.

To-day his brain was clearer than it had been for some time.

"Am I to stay here always, Lisbeth? When am I going home?"

"Is not this your home, dear? Where else would you be?"

"There's that City Road place. It's such a while since I was there."

"Oh, that's all right, father. Don't you worry about that. Are you not happy here with me?"

"Ay, girl, I think so—but there's rents."

She did not tell him that all the lodgers had decamped when they heard he was arrested, saying they would not lodge with a murderer.

But she patted him fondly on the cheek.

"Trust Lisbeth, dear old man, what money comes from that place no one shall have but you."

There was a sale of the furniture going on that very day, and the house had been let unfurnished. This Jim Grandtuning would have known if he had remembered what passed from one day to another, for the lawyer could not act without seeing him, and had been down to the cottage and received his consent in writing.

But Jim had forgotten all about it, and it was by no means the first, nor would it be the last time, that he would ask to go to his own house in the City Road.

Not but that he was perfectly happy with Lisbeth, but he seemed surprised at being there, surprised at the tender care she took of him and the many attentions he received.

Of course he would trust her, he told her so now as he had up his face for the kiss he knew full well he would receive.

Then a cloud of darkness seemed to come over him. "If I only knew," he said. "If I only knew."

And the perturbed mind seemed to be busy searching out something that was wholly incomprehensible.

"Know what, dear?" and Lisbeth knelt down beside him, laying one hand on his shoulder and the other on his knee.

"Whether I really did kill that man or not."

"No, dear, a thousand times no, you did not."

And a shiver of horror passed over Lisbeth, as it was brought so forcibly home to her how much that terrible trial had cost him.

"But, Lisbeth, they said I murdered him, else why did they put me in prison?"

"They discovered you did not, dear, that is why they let you out and sent you home to be my good old father and let me take care of you."

"Yes, that was kind, very kind. And so you do not mind letting me stop here for a little while, till ——"

"Till what?"

"Well, I don't know what will happen. Perhaps they will come and take me up again—but you will not let me go, Lisbeth, will you?"

"You shall never leave me again so long as we are both alive."

And molding tears fell from Lisbeth's eyes on to the man's hand as it lay beside hers on his knee.

"Don't cry, Lisbeth, don't cry, I won't be tiresome. I'll be very good and give you as little trouble as I can."

She did not reply in words, her heart was too full to speak, but she gave him an affectionate hug, which was, perhaps, more eloquent than anything she could have said.

And then she returned to the culinary duties she had too long neglected, wondering, while she busied herself among her pots and pans, whether life would go on more steadily if the contractors were to go abroad for a time and the misery of those dreary interviews with Sir Clement were thus removed.

Lucky for Lisbeth, as for many another heavily-weighted one, that she was no weather prophet, and did not, therefore, know in which quarter the wind was likely to veer or what depressing storm clouds were predicting.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Know what, dear?" and Lisbeth knelt down beside him, laying one hand on his shoulder and the other on his knee.

"Whether I really did kill that man or not."

"No, dear, a thousand times no, you did not."

And a shiver of horror passed over Lisbeth, as it was brought so forcibly home to her how much that terrible trial had cost him.

"But, Lisbeth, they said I murdered him, else why did they put me in prison?"

"They discovered you did not, dear, that is why they let you out and sent you home to be my good old father and let me take care of you."

"Yes, that was kind, very kind. And so you do not mind letting me stop here for a little while, till ——"

"Till what?"

"Well, I don't know what will happen. Perhaps they will come and take me up again—but you will not let me go, Lisbeth, will you?"

"You shall never leave me again so long as we are both alive."

And molding tears fell from Lisbeth's eyes on to the man's hand as it lay beside hers on his knee.

"Don't cry, Lisbeth, don't cry, I won't be tiresome. I'll be very good and give you as little trouble as I can."

THE

MYSTERY OF CLEMENT DUNRAVEN.

BY JEAN MIDDLEMAS,

Author of "A Girl in a Thousand," "Saved by a Hair," etc.

CHAPTER XXIX.—A CRUEL BLOW.

The Cobwell railway station was in an unusual state of fuss and flutter. An up-train and a down train were in at the same time, owing to a short accident having taken place and causing a delay on the line further on. Consequently the couple of porters, who were quite enough for ordinary requirements, found themselves pushed and worried more than ever with the luggage and conflicting travellers, especially as among the latter were Sir Clement and Lady Gertrude Dunraven, waiting for the further train which had been so unexpectedly stopped, both by Sir Wilfrid and Lisbeth Templemore. At first it had been a difficult matter to move Lady Gertrude away from the little baby's grave, but after much persuasion and telling her it was for the Clement's sake, she consented to go.

Having done so, meanwhile, she was in an immense hurry to be off, and, as she said, get very far from a place where the day she had been brought home on account of the Lord's death, even before her bereavement had overwhelmed, there had been nothing but misery and sorrow.

All the fuss and commotion at the station did not serve to raise Lady Gertrude's spirits.

"An accident," she said; "always trouble wherever we go; it really is most strange," and she began to cry as best she could, for Lisbeth's cheery voice kept her up.

Lisbeth and Sir Miles Templemore had come to the station to see them off, as they, Sir Miles intended to do some work, for he said he would accompany them to London and start them next day by the boat express.

"Will you not come, too?" Lady Gertrude had asked. "It will be so good for Clement to have you."

But Sir Miles replied that he had some business to attend to, and he would come the second day after.

The fact was that a letter he had had a few minutes ago from Mr. Sharpe, the solicitor, Philip's father, had there had directed that it would be better for no one to know even how the land lay, and must have made up to it with a round before the post on an appointment. He must know all his facts by interviewing his up his client.

At last all the luggage was in the van, and the train moved off, the last sight of the station on Lisbeth, the tears in her eyes, almost always watching.

She was glad they had gone away for awhile—it was a relief in many ways, yet at the same time she could not help regretting the departure, and wondering when, or if ever, the thought of them once would be endured.

Then she went slowly up the steps to enter the room the door having at the back of the down station. On the platform she found quite a crowd of people, many of them agriculturists, for it was market day in Cobwell, and all the neighborhood round came more or less to the town.

From where Lisbeth had viewed the carriage in which Sir Clement and Lady Gertrude sat, she had caught a glimpse of a woman, a stranger, standing apart and of more importance. A tall woman dressed and long cloak to match, and a closely fitting bonnet with a long blue gauze veil which she invariably pulled down over her face—was now her unalterable costume. She had intended to wear black, but Sir Clement had set himself so resolutely against it, that to please him she had moderated the rigor of her appearance. It mattered very little to her what she wore as long as people did not know how wretched she felt. It was in order that they should not read this on her face, which she would fain keep veiled, that the veil was always down, especially when Lisbeth took her into Cobwell.

As it was, the gossips said you would scarcely know Lisbeth for the same person. She had grown so matronly and looked ten years older during the last few months. Of course, it was all put down to her father having been tried for murder.

She got through the little crowd at the station as quickly as she could, answering with her customary civility but in curtly as possible, and went through the wicket, out into the road. There was a lively wind blowing as it often does in March, causing the door to the station that she had to push past him in order to get out.

He also turned as she looked back. Where had she seen him before?

He was the man who had watched her in church. Days ago. What was he doing here? Why had he come all the way from Yorkshire to look at that poor stone again? Was he recognizing her? Had she not better hurry away as fast as she could?

But an unaccountable fascination seemed to detain her, and her limbs felt as if they would not obey her will.

Attracted, perhaps, by her fixed look, he looked at him, as drawn to her by some occult power, Mr. Singleton, for it was indeed he, went up to her.

"You are a nurse, I see, by your dress. Perhaps you can help me in a little information for which I am making."

Lisbeth bowed her head, but did not speak, nor did she attempt to pass on.

"Better that she should answer him, than for another to do so," she thought.

"Does not Sir Clement Dunraven live in this immediate neighborhood?"

"He does. At Abbyne Court."

It was with the greatest difficulty that she kept her voice steady as she replied.

"How far is it from here?"

"About three miles. But you will not see Sir Clement. He has started for the Continent by the train which left a few minutes ago."

And she knew that Sir Clement was gone would Lisbeth feel better, especially as Mr. Singleton did not appear to recognize her.

"How very unfortunate. I missed him by been a few weeks ago, and now I have just missed him again."

"Do you want to see him on very particularly?"

"I do. I have an idea that I know him, and if so I should like to renew the acquaintance. It appears you have been, as you say, to their place?"

"I have lately been nursing his wife, Lady Gertrude. They have lately lost their only child, the heir. It is on that account for a change for her that they have gone abroad."

"Indeed, I am very sorry. Is Lady Gertrude Sir Clement's first wife?"

"No one ever heard of his having had another, and he always kept alone with her niece, Sir Louis, until he married Lady Gertrude."

It was a great relief to Lisbeth to speak, and

It was a most unpleasant manner, and a most indelicate one.

"It is odd," commented Mr Singleton, half to himself.

"Why do you wish to know if Sir Clement was last summer with — about Lisbeth.

"Because some two years ago, or rather more, I was at a house-party at — where Sir Clement was also staying, and I saw a good deal of him and — Lady Gertrude. He has been so much in Lady Gertrude's sight as you know, and did you notice those people —"

"I — did — not — with Templemere, to whom I introduced —"

"My good friend, you will have to go a little further afield to find the people you are in search of. I took them to a concert at the Langham almost an hour —"

"I see, I see," Mr Singleton said when I asked him about the matter —

"Do you know them Mr Singleton?"

"I do. His manner interested me very much about the marriage, and struck me as peculiar."

Lisbeth did not speak. The recollection of the last few minutes were so crushing that she was breathless. At last Mr Singleton went on —

"If I am not mistaken, Miss Lisbeth, it is evident that the man who is interesting Mr Vaughan should use the name of Clement."

"I don't think there was anything said on the subject when I was visiting Lady Gertrude, but I believe his father was killed in the Balkans," returned Lisbeth, as quickly as she could.

"That was think it was a name which Sir —"

"It must be, I should say, or we should have heard something about it. Sometimes however, the subject has been discussed freely enough —"

"Well, I am sorry I asked Sir Clement. You really must know he was in my going up to Liverpool —"

"Of course you can go if you like to see the place and have a look with the house-keeper, though I don't think she knows as much as I do. She has not been there very long. I will show you the way if you like."

Lisbeth had not the slightest intention of

letting him out of her sight to have any communication with anyone of who could be sure, but she did not think it would do to let her suspicion to prevent her going.

Her mother was astonished.

"If you are sure Sir Clement is not at home, what is the good of our going up there?" she said. "My wife, who is so much, does not know I am out of London. I want to get back as quickly as possible."

This was good news for Lisbeth, but she did not allow herself to appear interested. She only said very quietly —

"I am sure Sir Clement is quite I never know how to see them all to some lady Gertrude should want me."

"I wonder where there is a train back to town?" He took a pad out from a little in addition to the telegraph forms out of the station book and began to make a —

I was afraid Mr Singleton Lisbeth would have wanted him. Second thoughts that she decided it was wiser to go to town of the world and see how all the second matter ourselves, and if he got into communication with one of the Lisbeth people he might find out who she was, and her name would betray her.

In her selfish consideration to see that there would be an "up" train in five minutes, by which he thought it best to return to town, though he felt very much as if he had come on a long errand and got very bad information.

"I'll walk across the bridge with you if you like," suggested Lisbeth, "and I'll tell you anything you want to know about those people that I know myself."

"Awfully good of you. But can I not ring up your remarks here?"

"Not in the least. My patient is just gone. I have no particular engagement this morning."

So they started together back to the platform from which Lisbeth had only just come. Mr Singleton asking her many questions about Miss Vaughan's death as they went along.

Lisbeth, however, did not consider it necessary to know anything that was not in the newspapers, and professed herself quite unable to help Mr Singleton.

All she knew was that a week before and after and being followed at once by the death of her — she had been a watcher about to the sick-room at the Court.

When the conversation came round to her therefore Lisbeth felt no longer was any —

Mr Singleton held out his hand to her —

"I am glad I met you. Before we part you must let me your name."

"Miss Lisbeth Mr Singleton," she answered, — "I am known as Miss Lisbeth — and your name? I am going to write to Lady Gertrude about a conversation she left me, and I will tell her of this interview."

She knew it only too well, still it was the —

He gave her a card out of his pocket book, — Mr Singleton," and as he did so he crushed the rising hope that had sprung into her heart when she thought that perhaps she had got rid of him for ever.

"— am taking my sick wife abroad," he answered — perhaps we may meet the Clements. Have you any idea where they are going?"

"Not the least. They never to say —"

The answer was a hurried one, and Lisbeth entirely forgot she had just said that she was going to write to Lady Gertrude.

It was as good to any other, however, for the train glided off, and Mr Singleton had no more to make further inquiries.

As the turned, sound feeling almost faint from the relief of having got rid of him, a voice said — "Miss Elsmere! I thought I should have been in time to see the Dunsmore off, but I hear they went by an earlier train. Who was that?"

The speaker was Sir Wyatt, curious as one has ever to know all about everything that was going on.

"A friend of Mr Vaughan's," replied Lisbeth, still with an effort keeping up the outside of answering with indifferent questions that were to her of such vital importance. "He wanted to see Sir Clement, and consult with him, and learn all particulars. He was sorry to have missed him."

"Jolly good thing he did. But I heard but had enough of that subject. Pity I did not see him, I could have told him all he wanted to know."

Lisbeth could not help shuddering at the thought of what might have been the result —

"I am sure you must need a — about — these dreary wet evenings," said the doctor, who saw her — "I shall have you on my hands next. Let me see my way and I will

[illegible] my hands now. Get into my trap and I will drive you home."

Lisbeth accepted [illegible]. She felt very weary and out of spirits. A drive through the fresh air might do her good. At all events, it was better than walking through the town, to be cross-questioned at every turn about the Dunsevens and their affairs [illegible] was to keep up appearances with Dr Watson and seemed to be her usual self. The young man was, however, such a good talker that [illegible] and they drove away in the smart little gig very briskly [illegible] and he took it for granted that Lisbeth was doing the same.

One not very pleasant outcome of the drive neither of them had considered, which was, that [illegible] by Dr Watson in his gig, had set the whole of Colehill chattering and wondering whether the bellringers would have to practise wedding chimes.

Not that such a wedding would have afforded Colehill any particular satisfaction. The Glendinnings were by no means popular, more than half the population still believing, notwithstanding the verdict, that Jim Glendinning had had a hand in the death of Pierce Singleton.

[illegible]

If Lisbeth had been less absorbed in the remembrance of her recent meeting with Rev Abel Singleton, she would not have run the gauntlet of general observation. As it was, she felt thankful for the doctor's [illegible] and did not consider anything that lay beyond. She had long used to look up to him for help and advice. It would have seemed unnatural to have to forego his assistance.

Of course Dr Watson could not help seeing that Lisbeth was by no means herself, but he ascribed it to her parting with the [illegible]. He was quite aware of her devotion to Lady Gertrude, and that the departure of the inmates of Alsyne Court would create a great blank in her life.

Ah! if he could only fill it, he thought, as he sat there by Lisbeth's side. And then he, too, fell to ruminating over the suspicion that had been awakened in his mind in connection with little Lisa.

[illegible]

[illegible]

"I'll just come in and see if all your people are all right," said the doctor.

In reality he wanted to have a good look at Lisa, and see if he could trace any likeness that would be a guide to him for the future.

What he saw in the child he did not say, but he looked so grave that Lisbeth asked excitedly what ailed Lisa, was she ill, did he see any [illegible]

"[illegible] nothing to be anxious about. I am only studying heredity, it is a pet study of mine," said he laughed.

"Studying heredity, what do you mean? What heredity did he find in Lisa, she was —" and the [illegible]

[illegible]

Dr Watson was gone, and [illegible]

She wondered what [illegible]

She went upstairs to her room, [illegible]

Lisbeth had that day gone through more than she could well endure. [illegible] Could she go on bearing this burden in silence?

Should she make a clean breast of everything to Dr Watson; would he not help her and [illegible]?

CHAPTER XXX. [illegible]

"[illegible] a drive would do you good. [illegible] we might as well have moved down if you do not benefit by the change."

"I am tired, Clem, I feel as if I only want to be [illegible]."

[illegible]

And so he did. There was a good deal of [illegible] hearing and seeing nothing to annoy him, he had to an extent thrown off his weight of worries. Of course, he had his dark hours, and very terrible they were; [illegible] doing him good. [illegible] but her own heart was very sad [illegible] the baby died.

Sir Clement, however, would not believe that. He declined to see any danger in his Gertie's condition.

Other women had lost children before and had got over it, why should she not do the same? There was no especial [illegible] of that Dr Watson had warned him.

Lady Morton and Elvina Dobson would arrive in a couple of days, and then there would cheer up. How could he, miserable and remorseful wretch that he was, expect to be able to cheer her up, [illegible] knew. Thus he reasoned himself as he wandered about the lovely garden in which the [illegible] Lady Gertrude would be induced to accompany them in their wanderings. If he could only get her into the [illegible] every day to hear the band, he [illegible]

How [illegible] is hope, yet [illegible]

It is fortunate to hope, yet how far hope may deep words be disguise.

Wimbledon was not perhaps altogether the very best place to which Lady Gertrude could have come, a more bracing climate might have served her better. It was Lady Marian who had chosen it. She had, or imagined she had, various ailments for which a residence at Wimbledon would be beneficial, since it abounds in specialists of considerable renown, and, the chief object being to get Lady Gertrude away from the remembrances that surrounded her at Aberyn Court, the climate of her temporary abode had not been brought under discussion.

"Do you not think if I ordered a carriage you would drive to the Great Chapel, or the Theatre, or some of the places of interest in the neighborhood," protested Sir Clement.

"I am very well here at this window, I can see the trees."

They were at an hotel on the Wimbledon Common, looking on to the Park.

"Then I must go out alone," said Sir Clement, with a sigh.

This appeal at once roused Lady Gertrude.

"I will go with you, Clem, dear—forgive me for being so selfish. Order a carriage for two o'clock. It will be cooler then."

He kissed her and went out to give the order, wondering, as he went, what there was in him, a criminal, that few women should be always ready to sacrifice their wishes and pleasures to him.

Having arranged about the carriage to his satisfaction, he thought he would go to the post-office and see if there were any letters. Owing to some uncertainty about their rooms in the hotel, all letters were to be sent "poste restante," a plan which especially suited Sir Clement, as he could then receive letters from Lisbeth without their being observed either by his wife or the servants. There was one awaiting him now, with a small P marked in the corner, which meant that he was to open it when no one was by.

The sight caused Sir Clement, for though he himself had told her to put it, she had declined, saying "that the letters she intended to write him in the future would be of such a nature that anyone might read them."

Something unexpected, then, had occurred, Sir Clement feared, as he stood in the street tearing open the letter with trembling fingers, "perhaps the other child also was dead."

By one of those perverse whims, for which he himself could have given no reason, ever since the boy's death, Clement Dunraven had found himself constantly thinking about Lisa. Lisa, of whose existence he had not taken any account until within the last few weeks.

If any sickness or trouble had overtaken her he felt he would be sorry on his own account, as well as for Lisbeth's, whose idol he knew she was.

But Lisa was well and hearty, the missive began by telling him so, and he felt relieved.

Very soon, however, was he to have an entire spirit dashed to the ground as he went on with the letter and read the whole account of Lisbeth's interview with the Rev Abel Singleton.

Hydra headed, he feared, was the calumnious perverse who most inevitably, sooner or later, had cut his way.

Lisbeth had been most judicious, and had laid the ghost for awhile, true, loyal woman that she was; but there was no saying when it would begin to walk again, or at what point of his travels he might meet it.

He took a long walk before he returned to Lady Gertrude, although there were several letters at the post-office which he knew she would be glad to have, but he felt he did not dare meet her questioning glances until, after this fresh blow, he could manage to conceal something of his wounded pride.

That occasion he blamed Lisbeth for in his mind.

Why had she not asked where on the Continent this persistent person was going to take his sick wife? It would have been an easy to avoid that particular spot, and with the small extent the Continent had, they were not likely to travel about much. Now he would be kept in constant dread, every passing hotel visitors' books looked into the face of every stranger, afraid to speak to anyone who addressed him, lest the man who spoke should be magistrate, whose personal appearance he had totally forgotten. Oh, it would be too dreadful, a new phase and a most terrifying one in the painful life-drama he had so rudely and thoughtlessly prepared for himself.

When he reached the hotel, before he went into the room where Lady Gertrude was, he began the inquiries which would now be his daily task, by examining the book that lay on the table in the hall.

No fresh name or foreigner. He passed on to his wife's side with the letters he had brought her.

While she read them he stood looking at himself in the glass that hung over the mantel-shelf.

Engrossed in her correspondence, she did not heed what he was doing until he said

"Do you know, Gertie, I have a mind to let my beard grow. It will be wonderfully less trouble than shaving, and other bothering, too, I suspect."

She laughed as she said:

"Not unbecoming, boy, yes, but it grows. I should like to see you with a beard. No one will recognize you when you get back to England."

She little guessed that this was what he was looking at, and that, at the moment, every particle of it had died out of his manly face.

(To be continued.)

THE MYSTERY OF CLEMENT DUNRAVEN

BY JEAN MIDDLEMAS,

Author of "A Girl in a Thousand," "Sealed by a Kiss," &c.

CHAPTER XXX. (Concluded.)

The subject of the bazaar was now pursued, Sir Clement and yet his wife's consent to be being given, and that was all he wanted. Still, as was his wish when an idea he began to think of anything but home for the present.

"They will be here to-day, Clem," she said.

"By 'they' I suppose you mean Elvira and Lady Marion?"

"Exactly. I am so glad."

And the gentleman she showed about the matter quite verified his hope that with the arrival of her two intimate friends new life would be infused into Lady Gertrude's pretentious house.

This to an extent made him forget his anxiety about the man he thought a fool he knew might turn up at any moment like Banquo's ghost, and to view the seemingly easy success of his plan

That the latter was due to the check Chapel was much more ready than might have been expected, and to the same they attributed to the hold she gave through the others having as yet the happiness from the words that escaped from Lady Gertrude's guest.

The travellers had just arrived when they returned, and the greetings were effusive. Though extremely surprised with each other, as Lady Gertrude's words had been, Sir Clement had not failed to see that

Elvira Dunraven had quite recovered her spirits, and Lady Marion, notwithstanding her anguish at Vaughan's death, was in the drawing-room when Sir Clement had entered with the latter was done simply perfect as and though Lady Gertrude and the two very weary and would be glad to go to bed, she was not pressed to stay.

The shooting epidemic which Sir Clement had for some time past been prescribing for her in his mind had begun with a vengeance.

What a power of meaning efficacy of a look! Seeing the fate of many another woman that had gone before, and she was to be another victim, she thought

I cannot describe how by the time they separated for the night Lady Marion was completely upset that she nearly fainted when she was left alone with Elvira, and the latter had to carry her to her own room.

Lady Marion shook her head ominously as she now then departed

"I see plainly," she said, "where it will end. Poor Elvira! Poor young man! Oh dear, how the world goes!"

They will return, I hope so," said Elvira [illegible] asked, why should they not? [illegible] When I thought he loved another I doubted that they would ever be so, but I think we may [illegible] be happy yet."

Lady Marion shrugged her shoulders.

"I don't know what it all means," she said, "it is beyond you and me to fathom, but there is some thing [illegible] I am sure that [illegible] I was quite so queer before the baby [illegible] he gives you the idea of a man who is always expecting a bailiff or some police official to tap him on the shoulder. Between you and me, Elvira, and with closed doors, I should more half suspected he had had something to do with poor Pierce Vaughan's death if he had not been almost as queer before it happened.

"Oh, don't," cried Elvira, "pray don't say [illegible] there in my head, and I am dreadfully tired." Then, womanlike she asked, "What do you think we had done?"

[illegible] before he was married, I [illegible] he was always super, one will come out and [illegible] a scandal. But here he comes!" and [illegible] Lady Marion, continued—"I am sure you [illegible] and [illegible] to be [illegible] I have not

[illegible] born about an hour, it has been so difficult to rouse Gertie, but I hope she will be better now you have come."

"I hope so, indeed! We will do our best [illegible] have had a very pleasant time—have met a lot of desirable people."

"And some very undesirable ones," put in Elvira.

"Oh, that goes without saying. Well, even the undesirable ones be a very pleasant [illegible] they often amuse you and circulate [illegible] and by [illegible] that oddity who proposed to you on the platform of the [illegible]

"The wretch!"

"Hallo, Elvira, have you had a proposal?" asked Sir Clement, forcing himself to take an interest in their conversation, though his thoughts were elsewhere. "I did not accept him, I hope. What will Barkway say?"

Elvira did not answer, but she looked up and looked keenly at Sir Clement, as though waiting to find out how much he knew about her relations with Mr Milan Barkway.

"And then there were those queer people who arrived at Exeter the night before we left. A lively north-country parson and his second wife."

Neither [illegible] spoke a word of any importance that [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] to the [illegible] would have gone [illegible] had [illegible] would have [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] laughed [illegible] he looked and [illegible]

"I thought [illegible] to all the [illegible]

"So they do, but the big hotels were full, and we were all in an uproar with [illegible] and the [illegible] would have experienced without our assistance would, I think, have made them [illegible] [illegible] I hope we shall see him again. It's [illegible] I wonder what I did with it."

She put to her pocket and produced a small case, from which she drew the object for which she was looking—

Rev. Abel Singleton.

"There . . . look at it, Clement . . . He . . . up to it . . . he looks like an [illegible]"

[illegible] in her fingers.

[illegible]

[illegible] and I [illegible] with these [illegible] people.

"We tried to persuade them to come here," went on Lady Marcia. "By nothing them, we were sure it was just the place for an [illegible], but they were so bent on [illegible] we could not move them."

How thankful Sir Clement was that they were immovable, who shall say? Still, it was no pleasing contemplation that these [illegible] friends of his wife's [illegible] who could shed that light on his past life which must [illegible] him in the eyes of everyone for whose opinion he cared.

Above all, with Lady Gertrude.

Then thinking of her, he threw Mr Singleton's card back to Lady Marcia and asked:

"How do you think my [illegible] is looking — better or worse than you expected?"

Lady Marcia [illegible], answered thoughtfully:

"[illegible] of you don't take care, Clement, she will slip through your fingers. I [illegible] than [illegible] — but I suppose you have."

[illegible] to the contrary?"

"[illegible] don't [illegible] Do you and she have disagreements in private? [illegible] it is not my business, but I suppose [illegible] the idea of an unhappy wife [illegible]"

"[illegible] Lady Marcia, we have never had a word of disagreement in our lives. We are always most affectionate. [illegible] Gertrude is worried, the [illegible] to me, except, of course, the poor lady's death, and that was [illegible]"

"She was worried before the lady died. I [illegible] I thought you knew all about it."

"I assure you I know nothing. Ever since I married her I have made strenuous endeavours to do the best I can for her, and to keep her as much as possible from everything that might worry or vex her. [illegible] she is worried, but I fear she is very delicate."

And so saying, he laid his head on the table on his folded arms, and his whole frame shook convulsively.

[illegible] got up and went to him.

"[illegible] Clement," she said, "don't take on. We must cheer up [illegible] and she will be all right. She can't go on fretting if there is nothing to fret about."

He did not look up, but he took one of his hands from under his head and held it out to Marcia.

"If ever anything should happen to me you will be good to my [illegible], you and [illegible]"

She did not answer for a moment. The [illegible] of her name [illegible] startled her, but she pressed his [illegible] hand.

Then she tried to turn the subject from her.

"[illegible] Nothing [illegible] Gertrude [illegible] in danger [illegible]"

"[illegible] danger [illegible]" he answered. "[illegible] promise me you will [illegible]"

"Of course I will, but for goodness sake don't let us have any more dismal conversation to-night. We talk about horrors until we [illegible]"

"Yes, [illegible]" [illegible] "Let us go to bed, and get up in the morning prepared to [illegible] the brightest [illegible]"

And so she left him, both thinking they had discovered where the mischief lay. Sir Clement had some mortal malady, and Lady Gertrude knew or guessed of it.

Ay, so he had, but not of the sort they expected. If Singleton followed him up and chattered out the most ghastly past, there would be nothing for it but suicide.

Was that to be the end? he wondered. And how selfish an end! Was he to die for his own selfish pleasures as he had lived, leaving Lady Gertrude all alone to bear the brunt of the revelations that were to be made?

Danger for Gertrude. What did Marcia mean by danger to Gertrude? [illegible] she was going to die? His Gertrude to be [illegible] from him as the child had been, or [illegible]

[illegible] the morning [illegible] say, the law might do its [illegible]

When morning dawned Clement Dunraven was still sitting there thinking out the problem of his [illegible] miserable contemplation of what might [illegible], until Lady Gertrude herself, [illegible] in a trailing gown, stood on the threshold of the door, so startling him by her spectre-like appearance, that the strong man [illegible] to fear.

CHAPTER XXX. — An Important Message.

[illegible] de Pass.
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] letter from me will, I imagine, be very unexpected by you, but as I [illegible] [illegible] Lady Marcia [illegible] not for our selfish pleasure that [illegible] you to take this [illegible] but because we both think that your presence here will be of real benefit to Clement Dunraven, who seems to me to be ready to [illegible] from sheer despair. He [illegible] a beard which is never combed or trimmed, dresses in a slovenly fashion, wears whimsical [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] darkly-clothed specimen of masculinity we [illegible]. No one would recognise him, and I cannot help thinking [illegible] [illegible] the murder Clement became. Lady Marcia and I are having a real bad time of it, and I can think of no alternative but to ask you to come. It does not sound complimentary, and yet it is—for if I did not regard you as a true friend, I should not turn to you in trouble. So please come and be kind. I will [illegible] you, indeed I will, but do not try to bind me by nasty promises which may be hard to keep. Lady Marcia sends you [illegible] [illegible]

"Ever your loyal friend,
[illegible]"

[illegible]

Sir Miles was sitting in the Hungerry library when that slapdash, wayward communication was given to him. He had just been wondering why he had not heard from [illegible] and was considering whether it would be wise to start off to [illegible] and see what was going on.

The thermometer of his spirits went many degrees when he saw Elvira's writing, but it fell again somewhat when he read the letter. He loved Elvira as he would never love another woman, and was prepared to woo her persistently; still, he felt he was a very long way from having won her, since he was compelled to own that Elvira was quite capable of sending to him as a friend, and yet having [illegible]

However, here was a point gained. He would be near her, he would see her every day, and do her bidding in everything. It would be strange if—fortune favoring him—he did not conquer her in the end.

[illegible] Sir Miles have cared so much for [illegible] if she had been more easily [illegible] Certainly not; most men love [illegible]

After a few minutes he got up and rang the bell, taking himself meanwhile severely to task for having forgotten his friend Dunraven, and the lamentable condition in which Miss Dalton described him to be.

When the servant entered he was desired to tell Mrs Bolt to pack Sir Miles's things, as he was going abroad for a few weeks.

Sir Miles had never descended to the luxury of a valet. Since childhood faithful old Bolt had waited on him, and so long as she was able to do so, he would, he said, have no one else.

The servant merely asked when Sir Miles intended to start, and being told by the four [illegible] that he would take the night express from Victoria, the preparations, as far as Sir Miles was personally concerned, [illegible]

Mrs Bolt would not let "her boy," as she still called him to herself, go without everything that he could possibly require, especially as she had a shrewd suspicion that he [illegible]

Old Bolt might not, perhaps, have been quite so much elated over his departure had she known that as soon as he had given his order he betook himself to Lisbeth's cottage to say a few words of farewell, and tell her [illegible]

As usual, he found her busy in her little kitchen. Since the Dunravens left, [illegible]

He never yet said a word to Lisbeth that demanded yes or no for an answer. There was always something in her manner that repelled him whenever he arrived with the full intention of [illegible] Miles—his hope.

Lisbeth had begun almost to dread the [illegible]

Truly glad was [illegible] he was going to start for W[illegible]

[illegible] Lisbeth [illegible]

He would have got there [illegible] on Miss Dawn's [illegible] Hungerry [illegible]

Just [illegible] the porch. She would just give a [illegible]

Sir Miles and Lisbeth had been too much taken up with their own conversation to see their [illegible]

[illegible]—did not consider—but it had the effect of making the [illegible] Lisbeth would have [illegible]

When he reached the [illegible] he found [illegible] everything prepared, even the "[illegible]" [illegible] to take him to the station.

Arrived in London, he sent a "wire" to Elvira to [illegible]

"[illegible] tonight. Travelling straight through."

The promptness with which he obeyed her summons pleased the coquette [illegible] which, truth to tell, she had been growing rather weary.

It was evident that Sir Miles Bachelor was [illegible] present behaviour he exactly suited her. [illegible] lady Maria, to whom she had not confided her [illegible] to meet him. She received him, too, quite warmly.

"[illegible] afraid you must be terribly tired. We have [illegible] a room for you at the hotel [illegible]"

Tired, how could he be tired when [illegible]

"No, I have had quite enough of stuffy carriages. I shall prefer to walk [illegible]"

"[illegible] perhaps they will drive the luggage to [illegible], and you [illegible]"

He laughed, and said he believed in German honesty, and the end of the discussion was that the [illegible] went with the luggage, and Sir Miles walked with Elvira. How happy they both felt. Ay, both; until Elvira saw Sir Miles again after an absence of some four months, she did not know how really glad she would feel when she looked into his honest eyes, and what a privilege it was for a woman to be loved by such a [illegible]

into his honest eyes, and what a privilege it was for a woman to be loved by such a loyal, really good fellow. A qualm of conscience ought to have reminded her that she had been playing a little bit fast and loose with him, but she was too light-hearted to do otherwise than assure herself that it was most beneficial to a man first to be proved whether he were worthy or unworthy and, as she supposed she would have to marry him in the end, what mattered a little torture, since it would conduce to happiness hereafter.

That Elvira could have worked out this reasoning to her own satisfaction, or that of anyone else, is doubtful. Anyway she did not try. She merely enjoyed the possession of this man's devotion, and decided to go on for a while on the plan which had hitherto been so successful.

Of course, under the circumstances that had exiled Sir Miles to Wimbledon they could not devote their thoughts and conversation solely to their own affairs, nor did Elvira wish that it should be so. She was very thankful to have the mutually interesting topic of the Donavons to prevent Sir Miles from being too direct in his attentions to herself.

And in good truth he was not shamming an interest that he did not feel; he was so exceedingly sympathetic about his friend's trouble that his own happiness at finding himself by Elvira's side was considerably dashed.

"Do you really think that Donavon is going off his head?" he asked.

"I don't know what to think. He talks rationally enough, but his appearance is so changed you will scarcely know him. He has made a perfect mountebank of himself."

"What does Lady Gertrude say about it?"

"Poor Gertrude! She is so ill, she says very little. I do not think she notices much—she seems to get worse and worse every day."

"Ah, if that poor little boy had not died!"

"I do not think it is altogether the boy's death that is fretting Gertrude. I am sure there is something wrong about Sir Clement and she knows it. Lady Martin and I fancy, perhaps, he has got some incurable malady."

This was a new light to Sir Miles Berkeley, and one which he was not altogether inclined to accept. He had seen for some time past that trouble was hanging over the friend of his boyhood, but he did not think it was in the form of an incurable malady. However, of course, he could not tell what might have developed since they parted. He must reserve his opinion.

Lady Martin for once in her life had managed to put a check on her chattering propensities, and had not said a word about the coming of Sir Miles Berkeley. Great then, was the surprise when, accompanied by Elvira, he walked into the joint sitting-room of the little party. Even Lady Gertrude, who was lying on the sofa, roused herself as she very seldom did now, and welcomed him with exceeding cordiality. But, prepared though he had been by Elvira, Sir Miles was aghast at what he saw. Perhaps he had thought that her illness had been somewhat exaggerated and feared to his regret that this was not the case. The appearance of his friend, too, gave him cause for very grave apprehension.

As Elvira had said—

"Where was the smart, well-got-up Sir Clement Donavon, who had until now been in his dress and appointment a typical English gentleman?"

No; Sir Miles would not have known him had he met him unexpectedly.

As for the beard, it had grown so quickly and so grotesquely that there was reason for shrewd suspicion that it was not altogether real.

Sir Miles looked at Sir Clement so keenly that the wretched man reddened beneath his mask, and devoutly wished that Miss Berkeley had stayed at the Shrubbery, since he was much more likely than the ladies to interfere with the masquerading which was the outcome of Sir Clement's constant fear lest he should meet the Rev. Abel Singleton.

That his brain, not his body, was affected with some perchance incurable malady was the decision at which Sir Miles arrived during the first half hour he was in that room.

And he was not very far wrong. What man can suffer so intensely or constantly from the pangs of remorse as did Clement Donavon without the brain becoming more or less affected?

Nevertheless, Sir Clement was perfectly sane on all subjects that had no reference to that unsupportable dread of discovery which was making his life a burden to him. Above all, he was very sane in his strong objection to the way in which he considered that Elvira was playing with "that good fellow, Berkeley."

Naturally he supposed that Sir Miles had come to Wimbledon solely on Elvira's account. He never suspected that he had been made the excuse for his coming. He would persistently have pooh-poohed such a suggestion, and he would have been fairly right. If Elvira had not wanted Sir Miles, very assuredly she would not have sent for him.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE MYSTERY OF CLEMENT DUNRAVEN.

BY JEAN MIDDLEMAS,

Author of "A Girl in a [illegible]," "Against Her Will," &c.

CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued.)

There did not appear to be any chance of the scene ending in a quiet and quick manner. Sir Clement hung back while Lorna forced and coaxed herself, and wanted him to do nothing rejected in a way that riled Clement, who, notwithstanding his own grave shortcomings, appreciated most bitterly the upright, honorable qualities of his brother. Whatever he had done or was meditating about with Sir Miles he "meant for good," as the boy was expressing, urging him most strenuously to make Lorna give a definite "yes or no." But perhaps Miles Berkeley dreaded the "no." for days passed and he could not apparently summon up courage to take Clement's advice.

At last Lady Marsh, who under all the circumstances reasonably presided for her own amusement, arranged with some London friends she had met at the hotel to join the excursion that they would not go in a party to Schlangenbad.

Of course Lady Gertrude was out of the question, and for Clement to travel very hard to be out all, but Lady Marsh would take no excuse.

"I am most unwilling to go and leave you any more than you are to be left," she said, "but the very best evidence you can give me that you are sincerely sorry for your conduct is to go with me to Schlangenbad. We will simply drive up there, have luncheon and a stroll in the woods, and be back long before dinner time."

So Lady Marsh had her way, and after all came to the point. She took her Clement under her own protecting wing, leaving Miss Berkeley free to stay with Lorna, if she liked, to which she was glad to agree out of the opportunities.

Whatever he might have been or not at Christie, Guy Pole helped him very considerably hard to stay home.

Lorna was in ecstasies over the beauties of Schlangenbad. It was just the sort of place she loved. The red-roofed houses, the green hills, white peeping in corners where you least expected to find them, clustered her so picturesquely and characteristic barbaric way over the crystal of the [illegible] Miss Berkeley.

Lady Marsh laughingly said to her Lorna as they alighted some

"What you take a fast on [illegible] Miss and some hunt with a [illegible] and her part on which is occupied the centre of the [illegible]."

She will come back to be loved. If her Berkeley, a free man, I am afraid," said Sir Clement.

"There is a fool, for I [illegible] only wants to be united into a "you

And Lady Marsh was right. Lorna was getting tired of her ill-tempered patroness, and was overjoyed when she [illegible] extending the limits of enjoyment reserve, in order to make him speak [illegible]

They had wandered [illegible] and there was no sign of any [illegible] them, but suddenly [illegible] of the open country [illegible] and [illegible] the graceful [illegible] Lorna. The first [illegible] her heart [illegible]

[illegible] have to speak but he should utter those long [illegible] words which might perhaps banish him for ever from Lorna's side, and he felt as happy as he [illegible] She wanted her [illegible] he feared earth could have no greater happiness to [illegible]

Lorna was getting impatient and a little [illegible] with her [illegible] with on his allowing her [illegible] him at [illegible]

What could she do to correct the mistake she had made? Before she had time to [illegible] the matter out the question answered itself.

She caught her foot in the [illegible] that was lying across the path, and fell with a cry on to the [illegible] As it [illegible] had touched it Sir Miles raised her in his arms.

"My own, my love, my dear [illegible]," he whispered, "are you hurt?"

She did not struggle [illegible] from him, but let him carry her [illegible] that was among the trees at some distance off.

There he laid her gently on the [illegible] long [illegible] and [illegible] her to [illegible] in an [illegible] delight she looked up to him and laughed.

"You will never want to come out with me again if [illegible] you take fright [illegible]."

"Only say you are not hurt," he answered, very earnestly.

"I don't think I am much—only a little shaken. What on earth would you have done if I had broken my leg? Oh, Miles, I am so sorry to have frightened you."

She had called him Miles! The anxiety passed from his face like a cloud, and he became radiant with happiness.

"If you had broken your leg, I should have carried you back to the hotel, and devoted myself to you until you were cured, or I would gladly devote myself to you for the rest of my life, if you would only give me leave."

She held her hand out to him, and made him sit beside her on the mound.

"It is [illegible] and persistent you are," she said, glancing up at him. "I suppose I must give in. It seems as if that is your end and [illegible] you have an incurable malady."

"Say rather a malady that only you can cure. With you always by my side I shall be happy [illegible]."

"Sir, Sir Miles, you should not treat me so [illegible] I have [illegible] you have been so bravely, that if you really wish to [illegible] me with [illegible] I promise you in the [illegible] they had be very good to you still."

What reply to such a surrender was there but a kiss. Half an hour later, as the two friends who were waiting for them on the terrace at the Hotel Victoria saw them approach they knew what it meant, for the wedding favors might be ordered, and that the fashion and colors of the bridesmaids' dresses would be the talk for the next few weeks.

CHAPTER XXIII. [illegible]

"[illegible] we must go back to England at once. Your [illegible] be [illegible] about the settlements, the trousseau must be ordered, and [illegible] with [illegible]."

This was Lady Marsh's [illegible] before she even gave [illegible] to [illegible] the girl who was [illegible] by the knowledge that her [illegible] Miles Berkeley had conquered and forced her into the position of [illegible]

by had conquered and [illegible] her to the surrender of her independence.

"I am strange," she answered, "all so [illegible] ... before we go back to England. I have not been so happy for years as I have been since I came abroad, and misery will probably recommence as soon as we go back."

"Elvira, how wicked you are to talk like that about your home."

Lady Marcia was a woman craving for movement and excitement, and the enjoyment she had at first derived from the novelty of her life at Wimbledon was beginning to pall.

[illegible] with Clairy, she appealed to Sir Mervyn, asked him if he did not consider it imperative; his duty, in fact, that he should forthwith seek an interview with Mr. [illegible], and, therefore, that it would be better for them all to go home.

But Sir Mervyn said it must be entirely as Elvira liked.

However masterful he might become in the future—and there is no saying how even the best of us may drive if we hold the reins—he did not consider that he was yet in the position to thwart Elvira in even the smallest of her wishes. In truth, he was perfectly happy at the thought of lingering for a while longer at Wimbledon, and in no hurry to enter on the [illegible] arrangements which his forthcoming marriage would entail.

Both the lovers begged Lady Marcia to leave her "cure;" it would be quite time enough to think of returning home when she had taken the prescribed course of baths.

But Lady Marcia was restive. She was tired of the baths, which had so [illegible] been necessary, and her next mention of a return was to Lady Gertrude.

There she met with a ready response.

Lady Gertrude's eyes glistened through the tears that filled them as she spoke.

"If I could only get back and see my baby's grave once more I should die happy," she said.

"Really, Gertrude, you are too morbid. Who is talking of dying? It is where we are going to live we are thinking about, not where we are going to die."

"Ah, Lady Marcia, I cannot get any of you to believe that my days are numbered, though it is certain enough. I know. Poor, dear Clem, I wish he would realise it, for the blow will be doubly hard when it does come."

"My dearest Gertrude, this is sheer morbidness. You will never get well while you give way to such fancies."

"It is a fancy, Lady Marcia, that I am getting weaker every day, and that if I do not go back to England soon I shall never go at all, for I shall not be strong enough to accomplish the journey. Do persuade Clement to take me home—only do that, and my gratitude will be unbounded."

Lady Marcia was somewhat aghast. She had aroused a far more determined confidence than she had in the very least expected. In all probability she would not have spoken had she known how earnest Lady Gertrude would become; still, she decided it was as well to know the poor child's own sentiments, and, with her natural kindness of heart, she determined to aid and abet her wishes, especially as they coincided with her own.

Sir Clement, however, had become so strange of late, that if he wished to remain abroad, the chances were her advocacy would not be easy to conquer.

It was as she expected and feared. Sir

[illegible]
not be easy to conquer.

It was as she expected and feared. Sir
Clement had no desire to return to the old home. His unmistakably pronounced coupling with Lasbeth [illegible] had ceased to be a pleasure to him, and the constant presence [illegible] would bring him into an everabiding misery when he was at Alleyne Court.

He had fought hard to forget the misfortune since he came abroad, and at times had almost succeeded in doing so. It was only in the dead of night, when sleep refused to be wooed, that visions of that old [illegible] would come to him with terrible vividness. "What does [illegible] want to go home for?" he asked with fretful illnaturedness, when Lady Marcia told him how earnestly his wife craved to be back in her native land.

"She has grown so whimsical and tiresome of late, that really it is almost more than a man's temper can stand," he continued, answering Lady Marcia by his tone and the discontented fault-finding of his wife, that before she had time to reflect as to the wisdom of her words she answered him—

"She wants to go home to die—

To die—my Gertie—nonsense, Lady Marcia; she is much better. Ever since you and Elvira came she has been better—say you think she is better, and that it would be wicked to take her away from a place that is doing her so much good. Do you not honestly think it is for her good?"

Lady Marcia shook her head.

"I am afraid you are deceiving yourself, Clement. I, too, was deceived for a while, because I wished Gertrude to be better; I thought that she was so. But I am forced to say that I think she is very ill, and that she has not even the strength to wish to live."

"Why have we not had a doctor to see her?" he asked. "Watson must be a fool since he could not cure her; let us try a German."

"If you will, but I doubt any medicine doing her much good. Her physical strength [illegible] the [illegible] against [illegible] that [illegible] her life."

"You are always alluding to trouble. What [illegible] I should have [illegible] it was a sad and unhappy thing that the boy died, but she ought to have got over that by this time. I [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] What trouble has she [illegible] so hard [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] great [illegible] about [illegible] I [illegible] to know."

[illegible] felt [illegible], and spoke desperately, almost taking Lady Marcia's breath away by [illegible] of his words. But she was not easily repulsed when she had a fixed purpose in her mind.

[illegible] with an assurance that [illegible] him [illegible] as he did under the weight of so much secret knowledge.

"If you will make a clean breast of it, and tell me what troubles you, then I should be better able to [illegible] a reason [illegible] state of [illegible]."

"Nothing troubles me. How dare you [illegible] that I am troubled," he answered [illegible], having taken [illegible] one moment to recover from the blow her words had given him.

He was in an irritable mood that day. Of late Sir Clement's moods had been very [illegible] from black despair to high spirits. [illegible] an irritability that was almost unbearable. In those with whom he came in contact was no [illegible].

[illegible] to [illegible] unusual [illegible]

The latter phase was in the ascendant now, and Lady Marcia was to be exempted from suffering by it.

He went on talking rapidly and almost incoherently, with every [illegible] increasing in Lady Marcia's mind the suspicion he was so [illegible]

"Why people get up theories and fancies about other people's affairs puzzles me. I never [illegible] you might have any worry [illegible] 'Why don't you [illegible] abroad?' [illegible] I had no [illegible] which I [illegible] would [illegible] sooner [illegible] everything [illegible] and [illegible] if you [illegible] I prefer to stay here [illegible] my [illegible] to be [illegible]"

[illegible] an [illegible] of [illegible] Lady Marcia had had any [illegible] suspicions [illegible] was that he was going out of his mind.

She broke in with a few sympathetic words, interrupting what she considered his [illegible]

"My dear Clement, pray do not be annoyed by any [illegible] of ours. [illegible] my dear fellow, that both Kirkie and I are most deeply interested in you and Gertrude, that we love you both very dearly, and would do anything in our power to help you."

She laid her hand on his as she spoke. [illegible] and pressed it [illegible]

"I [illegible]," he muttered, "[illegible] and doing the [illegible] I [illegible] to be guided by you, Lady Marcia [illegible] what is best for Gertrude and for me."

"Well, I should certainly say what is best for Gertrude is to go home. She seems to crave for it, poor thing, so very earnestly, [illegible] you ought to accompany her. It is most absurd for you to talk of staying here alone. Gertrude would be absolutely miserable without you."

"As I said before, I will be guided entirely by you. Gertrude's health and well-being are my first considerations in life."

"Then I will tell her that you agree to take her back to [illegible] and we have the preparations for departure commenced at once."

"As you will."

The consent was grudgingly given, but it was a consent, and Lady Marcia had got her way. Whether it was the right way, and for the benefit of those [illegible] was somewhat doubtful, and [illegible] would [illegible] the [illegible] very [illegible]

On the face of things it seemed, however, the very best suggestion that could have been made, for Lady Gertrude rallied so wonderfully when she was told they would start for England in a few days that those interested in her began to think she would really get well after all if she were only judiciously nursed, and, strange to relate, the unanimous opinion was that Isobel Grandmaine would manage her better than anyone else.

Isobel Grandmaine! Why, they would all have jumped hastily to the conclusion that it was to her interest that Gerty should die if they had known how matters really stood.

So thought Sir Clement, and he was not far wrong; yet he would neither [illegible] such a [illegible]

Now that [illegible] that a move towards England should be made, both Mr. Mayo and [illegible] be [illegible] it would be quite [illegible] did not [illegible] be [illegible] when Lady Marcia [illegible] but once it was [illegible] to get home, she had not a [illegible] word to say.

They all [illegible] that the journey must be done by easy stages. Lady Gertrude was [illegible] through. The first halt was to be made at [illegible], and Sir Clement wrote and engaged rooms for [illegible] at the Hotel [illegible]. [illegible] none of the party had ever stopped in [illegible], it was decided that a [illegible] through the old town would be pleasant.

It was well they had arrived at this decision, for even with this short journey Lady Gertrude's strength was sorely spent, and to see her when she was carried from the train and laid on her bed in the hotel, it seemed exceedingly doubtful if she would ever reach England alive.

Sir Clement had been thoroughly awakened [illegible] of her dangerous condition, and he would not leave her, even for five minutes, if he could help it. The sight-seeing was performed by the two Mayos, chaperoned by Lady Marcia, who was in her glory. She loved sight-seeing, and [illegible] to her that Mr. Mayo and Kirkie saw far more interesting subjects to [illegible] each other's eyes than in the churches and galleries to which she seemed so dragging them.

The cathedral was, of course, thoroughly explored, and then [illegible] the church of St. Ursula [illegible] To see the bones of the eleven thousand virgins, martyred on the spot, and arranged in a pattern on the walls of the church, had [illegible] been Lady Marcia's fond idea ever since she came abroad, [illegible] her friends had heartily wished that they had all been buried years ago, so [illegible] would [illegible] and [illegible] about them.

To the church of St. Ursula they went, saw the bones, the treasure-room and all that was worth seeing to hear, Marcia's [illegible] despite [illegible] than [illegible] she had anticipated.

The [illegible] being some distance from the [illegible] where their hotel was situated, they had taken a carriage, which they had kept waiting during their inspection.

They were driving off when another carriage drew up [illegible] for the moment, forgetting her companions [illegible] and her [illegible] Lady Marcia cried, "The Singletons [illegible] I wonder what they are doing in [illegible]? They have [illegible] I should like to know where they are staying."

"At the [illegible] in all probability," said Mr. Mayo. "I don't think many English people stay at our hotel. The church service is at the [illegible] the Singletons is going to take it on Sunday."

"Well, we shall not be here, and I don't care. He [illegible] a good [illegible] a number of [illegible] and [illegible] there [illegible] I am sure he is one."

Sir Clement would [illegible] have endorsed that opinion.

Returned to their hotel, they found that Lady Gertrude had had a long [illegible] and the [illegible]

(to be continued.)

THE

MYSTERY OF CLEMENT DUNRAVEN.

BY JEAN MIDDLEMAS.

[illegible]

CHAPTER XXVIII.—THEY TWO TOGETHER.

The sun was shining gloriously into Lady Gertrude's room [illegible] and [illegible] as though [illegible] to [illegible] something in her beauty she smiled at the [illegible].

[illegible] the scene was a sad one, for the angel of death was hovering over the apartment in which Lady Gertrude lay.

She was reclining on a [illegible] near the open window, propped up by many pillows, her breathing being laborious and painful; but when a paroxysm more troublesome than the last came, [illegible] pillow, that [illegible], and during several weary hours of watching, Lisbeth's arm had supported her.

Sir Clement never left the room; he sat in an arm-chair, his face hid in his hands, only looking up occasionally to gaze at his dying wife, who could no longer speak to him, but smiled sometimes as though to let him know that she still recognised him.

Only these two watched with loving care the woman who had come between them by Sir Lionel's order and so separated them, that she had even made them break their marriage vow.

It was a strange and almost unnatural thing that both of them should so love Lady Gertrude that each would have surrendered life in order that she might linger a little longer on the earth.

But it was not to be, the death-warrant was spoken, and the pure spirit of her who lay there on Lisbeth's arm [illegible], ere many hours had passed, be carried away to her rest beyond the grave.

Yet, as Lisbeth sat there looking [illegible] on the white face, whereon the dews of death were slowly gathering, [illegible] with her disengaged hand smoothing the golden tresses from her brow, she never once thought of what her own position might be when Lady Gertrude was [illegible].

The offer of [illegible] that was on her lips was that [illegible] been answered, and that this pure, sweet woman would never know how fondly she had been [illegible] of [illegible] the [illegible] of his first transgression.

When she occasionally lifted her eyes [illegible] to the [illegible] what would be his fate when he was left alone. He had struggled and fought with darkness for Lady Gertrude's sake, what would he do now?

Knowing him well as Lisbeth did, she dreaded to think of what the future must bring for him, and what Lisbeth felt so terribly when she contemplated the tangled mesh of misery with which Clement Dunraven's life was surrounded, was the knowledge that she no longer loved him.

Pity him! ay, from her heart she pitied him, and [illegible] no longer [illegible].

[illegible]

Lisbeth's nature was too pure, too honest, too loyal, to have any fellowship with crime. [illegible] true to him. Whatever he and [illegible] she could never [illegible] he [illegible] she was dead. Never again would the sound [illegible] of his once fond lips, make her heart palpitate, and the blood [illegible] Nothing but pity, cold, wintery pity.

Ay, so it was, she gazed on his abject misery as he sat in the chair by the window, and her heart [illegible] no love there. It only seemed to well and bubble up beneath the coating of ice when she turned in tender care to Lady Gertrude and sought to mitigate the dying agony of that gentle creature.

While the sun was still high in the heavens the end came.

One lingering look of [illegible] Clement conveyed the sad news [illegible] by a mighty [illegible] of regret, that she was leaving him alone to fight with the difficulties of life, and then the pure spirit [illegible] on the wings of the angel [illegible] into the realms of space.

None other was present but those she had so strangely separated, and who yet were so strongly united in their love for her.

It was Lisbeth's hand that closed the loving eyes, then she reverently kissed the fair young brow and knelt beside the couch in silent prayer to the departed. [illegible] many seconds had passed, by Sir Clement's [illegible].

She rose from her knees and went to him, laying her hand on his shoulder.

"[illegible] Clement, you must be brave," she said, "thank God she is at rest. She might have lived to learn a terrible secret, and then what agony would have been hers."

"[illegible] you really think she did not know, Lisbeth?" If she did not know, why is she dead [illegible] nothing [illegible] a broken heart."

"[illegible] Clement, you do not mean it? You [illegible] she knew? Has she ever upbraided you with the past? [illegible] she [illegible] of the truth."

"Why, then, did she [illegible]"

"Because God willed it. She was always [illegible] the baby's birth, and its death killed her."

He seized Lisbeth by both wrists in a grasp that hurt, and dragging her to the side of the couch where the poor dead woman lay, he [illegible] Lisbeth [illegible] that you believe she died unaware of my crime."

"Before God I believe it, Clement. She thought that at times you were strange and there was something very wrong about you. Once she had a fancy that your odd ways were the result of drink, but of any worse offence than that, I feel certain she had not the slightest suspicion; so be comforted and believe she died loving you as devotedly as she did the day she married you."

"Married me—woman, how dare you mock me with the words married!" and he thrust Lisbeth from him as though she were solely to blame for the misery of the past.

Then he threw himself on Lady Gertrude's body [illegible] and implored her to look at him once more [illegible]

[illegible] Lisbeth was at her wits' end, [illegible] powerless to comfort or [illegible] heard approaching, and Lord Melbury, who had been summoned, but who had arrived too late, entered the room accompanied by Dr Watson.

Lisbeth felt she could rely on Dr Watson whatever the difficulty, but she was sorry to see Lord Melbury, though, of course, it was his right [illegible] but she dreaded what [illegible], grief as he was, might inadvertently say.

It is an acknowledged fact, however, that self-preservation, [illegible] people is stronger than any emotion. Certainly it was so with Clement Donnevan. He pulled himself together with a vigorous effort such as surprised Lisbeth, who had not believed him capable of it, and spoke to them so rationally, though, of course, with such overwhelming despair, that there was no fear of his betraying her [illegible].

This being the case, Lisbeth, thinking her presence in the house now that Lady Gertrude had breathed her last, might seem a [illegible], prepared to take her departure. Dr Watson said that if she would wait a few minutes he would drive her home.

[illegible] an engagement [illegible] Dr Watson [illegible] had been [illegible].

[illegible] to speak to her, and as she did not imagine that he intended to propose at such a juncture, she consented to wait for him.

She went downstairs into the hall and sat down in a large arm-chair. She was very weary, having been up for several consecutive nights with Lady Gertrude. Her strength [illegible] well nigh spent, yet sleep was far from [illegible] eyes. Her brain seemed to be in a whirl of [illegible] emotions, and [illegible] through her mind [illegible] quiet it.

She ought to be mistress here, and she was sitting like a servant waiting in the hall. That is what it seemed to her that [illegible] was whispering. Then the thought of the dear dead woman upstairs came [illegible] her mind, and she wondered that she, a [illegible] daughter, dared to think

of placing herself on an equality with the high-born Lady Gertrude. [illegible] whose proud [illegible] even if Sir Clement wished it, no, never, never could such a thing happen.

[illegible] the tempting voice [illegible] have you not spurned her [illegible], have you not sought to keep her out of her inheritance [illegible]. Just then with a vigorous effort she turned a deaf ear to the tempter [illegible].

[illegible] Lady Gertrude had [illegible] everything she ever [illegible] made that promise of marriage to Clement, and in death she shall still hold the same [illegible].

[illegible] the [illegible] had [illegible] more [illegible].

"Lady Gertrude [illegible] dead." [illegible] difficulty she realised the [illegible]. Still, the remembrance of her own [illegible] were not to [illegible] there would not be enough [illegible] public to read at the future.

[illegible] Clem was Dr Watson. Why did he not come? Why had she been such a fool as to wait for him? She was only adding another trouble to an already intolerably heavy storm. Surely she was not so weak but that she could not have managed to walk back to the cottage? She had neglected her little "home" most grievously of late. There must be no more wanderings. Now poor dear Lady Gertrude was gone, no one would want her—Clement? Certainly not. He must arrange the future as well as he could for himself. He had cast her forth like Hagar into the wilderness, and she would never return to Abeyne [illegible].

So deciding, she opened the door and went out. The glorious [illegible] of the setting sun nearly blinded her as she stood in the open air and looked across the terraces towards the lake, which here and there could be seen shimmering through the now leafy trees. Was not that glad and lovely scene that lay around the house of death a token of joy and hope? As for those who were gone, peace to their ashes, but for those who yet remained to battle with earth's difficulties, there [illegible] and Lisbeth [illegible] all around and [illegible] must be [illegible] in their [illegible].

She walked away with a quick step, [illegible] Dr Watson. The more she [illegible] about matters as they now stood, the more disinclined she was to discuss them with him. She did not go by the road, but took the [illegible] observing her [illegible] by a carriage. [illegible] anyone, she would get home quickly and unobserved.

The farm roads, which, according to the old [illegible] were, however, [illegible] to [illegible].

She had only just stepped into her own [illegible] the [illegible] and garden [illegible] was raised [illegible] were then heard [illegible] "[illegible] Lisbeth. Now I shall [illegible] surprised."

"I was [illegible]," [illegible] who spoke. "I was on my way up to Abeyne Court to see Lady [illegible], but I thought I would stop here as I passed, just to say [illegible]" [illegible] in her cheery way.

Lisbeth was silent. [illegible] to contradict this confident assurance that all was well and [illegible]? She was even [illegible] she had been [illegible] of death.

Lady Marcia could not help noticing the [illegible] that came over her face.

"[illegible] what has happened?"

"The dear sweet lady whom we loved so well passed away about an hour ago."

"[illegible] Gertrude dead! I did not think it would have been so soon. Poor dear, poor dear, and I was so looking forward to seeing her again. Was Miss Dobson with her?"

"No. No one but Sir Clement and myself."

Lady Marcia looked somewhat searchingly at Lisbeth. [illegible]

Lady Marcia looked somewhat searchingly at Lisbeth. "I wonder why Lady Gertrude was so fond of you, it was strange—"

The remark was [illegible] complimentary but Lisbeth took it very meekly.

"I did my best to serve and help her," she said.

"Yet report seems in the past to have mixed your name, in more than one [illegible], with [illegible]."

[illegible] the events of the last few days had made her, but she answered promptly.

"Sir Clement Donovan is no more to me than any other gentleman about these parts whom I have known from childhood."

There was truth in the answer, since in the future she did not intend that he should be more to her. Yet to anyone who knew her history, it would have seemed a very bare-faced assertion.

Lady Marcia knew nothing, but from a hint that had lately been given her, she thought she would find out, if possible, if there ever had been anything.

"Well, poor dear Gertrude was not jealous, at all events," she said, in her off-hand way. "[illegible] I suppose it was all right."

"[illegible] she had no cause for jealousy. If ever I loved anyone who was not of my own faith and kin, it was Lady Gertrude."

Lisbeth spoke very earnestly and resolutely; still, she would have [illegible].

"I have a false cold that thrills through my voice
That almost lessens up the heart of life."

What did Lady Marcia know? For Lisbeth had not seen her for months, and it was evident that during that time someone had raised suspicions in the breast of the talkative [illegible]. [illegible] Lady Marcia, although she had been the chief promoter of [illegible] journey to England, had, after all, remained alone in Cologne with only her maid and allowed the others to proceed to England without her.

"Now," she said, "[illegible] I go away and leave that poor fragile Mrs Singleton and her [illegible] in a foreign hotel, when neither could speak a word of the language?"

It was by acts such as these that Lady Marcia had gained the reputation of being exceedingly kind-hearted, though her intimates, [illegible] her perhaps better than [illegible], frequently said that a love of [illegible] generally lay at the root of her [illegible].

Elvira was most certain that it was so in this instance, and so angry that Lady Marcia should wish to desert them for those people whom she scarcely knew, that she [illegible] nothing should make her stay with her, and as for Clement Donovan, he was so anxious to get away [illegible] [illegible] though [illegible] [illegible] to Lady Gertrude's house."

[illegible] Elvira, why should they stay [illegible] Lady Marcia was always most erratic and strange in her vagaries, let her stop if she wished it, only she was not going to [illegible] her.

And so Lady Marcia remained [illegible]. What had happened after [illegible] of the party, [illegible] [illegible] faint step in the matter might be favourable even to Sir Clement. Lady Marcia was not, however, likely to be long silent.

[illegible] however, [illegible] long silent.

"I wish I had come back with the others," she said. "[illegible] if I had to [illegible] [illegible] I should not have stayed."

"I heard you remained behind with some friends."

"[illegible] friends—only acquaintances—but they were in trouble. I like to help people who are in trouble, but, of course, the [illegible] trouble would have come just as if I had stayed. Tell me all about it, [illegible] did she die so suddenly? [illegible] Your dear mother, do you think he would like me to go to him?"

"Lord [illegible] is there and the [illegible] [illegible]," answered Lisbeth, [illegible] on the whole to get Lady Marcia back to the account of what had happened at Cologne.

But it was of no use. Without asking a thousand questions there was no chance of hearing anything. She had apparently forgotten that the Singletons had ever existed and could think of none but the [illegible]. Lisbeth had to give a detailed account of how the last few days had been passed, and even though she was so weary that she could scarcely stand, Lady Marcia did not apparently notice it until her curiosity was thoroughly satisfied.

Then she suddenly remarked that it was beginning to get dark, and that she wished to walk back to Brentside, her carriage not being available, as the horse had been turned out to grass during her absence.

"And the poor little woman will wonder what on earth has become of me," she went on. "[illegible] there is [illegible] at Brentside as well as at [illegible] Court, my dear Lisbeth. The man I [illegible] [illegible] is dead. He was a clergyman, poor fellow, but [illegible] there were no children; clergymen generally have such large families; so I brought the poor unfortunate little widow back with me."

Lisbeth had heard far more than she wanted to know, since she was told that Mrs Singleton was at Brentside.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—Seven

Jim Glendinning had his phases of [illegible]. For days he would sit silent, only replying [illegible] "yes or no" when a direct question was asked him. [illegible] [illegible] Lisbeth hoped that no one believed what he said, but it must seem she was [illegible]. People have a knack of believing [illegible] [illegible] and not quite.

[illegible] the weather was cold Jim [illegible] invariably sat in front of the kitchen fire; just as, when it was warm and sunny, he always sat in the porch. The short days had come, and he was very rarely in the porch now, and altogether though he preferred the kitchen because there was more going on there to amuse him, and when visitors came to see Lisbeth in the parlour he could generally hear what they were saying; [illegible] the partition being a very slight one. It was no [illegible] to Jim to know what was going on though he very rarely gave any evidence of his knowledge.

Lady Gertrude had been dead some weeks, but he had never vouchsafed one single word on the subject; none of the inmates of the house thought that he had grasped the fact

[illegible] thoughts that he had grasped the fact. Only Lisbeth was quite aware that he knew all about it, and spent a good many other things of which it would have been as well had he remained in ignorance.

"Only an old person and Jim Glendinning always smile when he sees him coming to the cottage, and that was Dr Watson, who had been most kind and considerate to the unfortunate man. It was a cold bleak day in early December, the north wind was howling piteously when Jim Glendinning sat up wood, his hands extended to catch the blaze, warming himself by the kitchen fire, and Dr Watson, as he occasionally did, arrived at the back door. There was a look on Glendinning's face that surprised him: a strange moment of intelligence in the dark eyes, rather wicked intelligence, too, for the old man looked as if he were ready for any mischievous act and that the recent stupidity was changing into cunning, was what the doctor feared.

Dr Watson had had a great deal to do with mad people in his younger days and was not in the least afraid of encountering one, so he accosted Glendinning in his usual friendly way.

"Glad you're up," said Dr Watson, who, even in his talkative moods, used as few words as possible.

"That's all right. Don't you feel well? You look all right. Better than usual. What has happened?"

"Tell me, why do you come here so often?" was the retort.

"To see you. Are you not glad to see me?"

"No, no, no! I shudder!"

The doctor winced up: he could not remember ever having

"She'll never marry you. Go away and never come back no more."

"How do you know?"

"And Jim can't catch a fool as he hates."

"You will have to prove your knowledge before I will believe it."

"He is in the other room."

"He! Who?"

"Sir Clement Thurstan."

"My lord, dear, what are you talking about?"

"I'd Jim he knows, he don't quite a fool," and again that most chaotic laugh.

"Sir Clement Thurstan had not lost his wife, to whom he was dearly attached, only a few months ago in the grave. But there, why am I discussing such a subject?" But Dr Watson, right enough, thought the poor fellow had dreamed, and that he was not justified in heeding his ravings.

"Clever people think they know more than fools, but they don't," said Jim mockingly.

Then there was a pause and Dr Watson became aware of voices in the next room: that Lisbeth was conversing with a man, whose voice certainly resembled Sir Clement Thurstan's.

"Where Lisa's father—ask her? Where Lisa's mother—ask her?"

And Jim Glendinning chuckled over the dismay that was observable on Dr Watson's face at the question.

He had imagined for some time past that Lisbeth was Lisa's mother, but that Sir Clement Thurstan was the father was indeed a completely new light to him.

"Impossible, Glendinning, impossible," he stammered. "Lisbeth, why should you tell me this?"

Glendinning pulled his chair up close to the doctor, so that his words as he spoke them seemed to him like the other's face.

"You've been good to me and I'd tell you the truth, because I like you. I have known for months that he is Lisa's father—and he murdered Pierre Vaughan—because he found it out."

"Viper—wretch—that you are. You say you like me, and you tell me this to make me actually miserable. I will not believe you."

And Dr Watson started away from the man who had come so uncomfortably near him, and began to walk excitedly up and down the little room.

"Poor fool, poor fool," muttered Glendinning, "who, when the bandages are taken off his eyes, will not believe what he sees."

The little doctor did not reply to this. He was battling with himself, trying to get Glendinning's ghastly information away from him, as one seeks when the morning light arrives to dispel the horrors produced by a bad dream.

"This is only a bad dream," he argued: "the man is demented and not responsible for his words."

Still, dream though it might be, it refused to be driven away. Reason with himself though he might, the recollection of what he had heard that day would never be entirely obliterated.

Jim Glendinning, seeing his distress and perturbation, sat down and laughed. The mischief he had done afforded him immense satisfaction.

His laughter served him to steady the doctor's nerves, as he realized that no sane person would behave as Glendinning did.

"Come, come, my man," he said, pulling himself together with an effort. "We have had enough of that: I shall have to change your medicine, give you a stronger dose."

But Glendinning was not to be cowed.

"I don't think more that Dr Watson was such a fool," he muttered.

"I should be a fool if I listened to you. Leave the subject alone, for good: I shall not return, I give you my promise to be silent, and if I find out you are right I'll tell you. There, will that satisfy you?"

Glendinning nodded his head.

Not that the doctor had any intention of doing, but he wished to pacify, and, if possible, silence the unfortunate man.

"I am satisfied," he responded, for Glendinning said promptly. "It was a my business, but it is to you as you'd best see to it."

(To be continued.)

THE

MYSTERY OF CLEMENT DUNRAVEN.

BY JEAN MIDDLEMASS,

Author of "A Girl in a Thousand," [illegible] [illegible] by [illegible]

CHAPTER XXXVI ([illegible])

The [illegible] door was pushed open and Lisa herself toddled in. She was just over two years old and [illegible] a remarkably forward child; she [illegible] about all over the place by herself and was very fond of the old man whom, by a wayward freak, she always called "Gran."

She went straight up to him now, and without any invitation, climbed at once on his knee, and then sat there laughing at her own feat of [illegible]. Lisbeth had long discovered that Lisa [illegible] always quiet Glendinning when an unusually troublesome fit was upon him.

She had the effect of doing so now, and he patted her face and kissed her pretty hair as she sat there smiling and chattering to him in an almost [illegible] [illegible] language.

Dr Watson was considerably moved as he looked on the scene. The [illegible] man had become so [illegible] as [illegible] [illegible], a totally different being to the [illegible] [illegible] of a quarter of an hour ago.

"Of course there was no sense in what he said; [illegible] was the [illegible] [illegible] of an [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] when he [illegible] of Sir Clement [illegible] [illegible] his [illegible]. As to the parentage of Lisa, Dr Watson did not feel [illegible] [illegible].

Sir Clement's voice could still be heard in the adjoining room, so the doctor rose to take his leave, since there did not seem any chance of an interview with Lisbeth. As he went to the door—having shaken hands with Glendinning, who had apparently entirely forgotten all about the conversation they had [illegible]—the [illegible] [illegible] door opened, and he distinctly heard Lisbeth say:

"Lisa is your child, and, of course, you can [illegible] her when you choose; I have no wish to keep her away from you, but I will never be more to you than I am at this moment. The past is dead, and there can be no resurrection of it in the future."

Dr Watson [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] as quickly as he could, and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] appear to have heard anything, only seemed surprised that Dr Watson should have returned.

Another [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] footsteps could be heard going towards the front door.

He stopped on the threshold.

"Then, then, is [illegible] final decision?" he said to Lisbeth.

"Nothing will ever change me," she answered, as she walked with him down to the gate, out of hearing of anyone in the house. "Lady Gertrude was believed by everyone to be your lawful wife. I will neither accept an unlawful [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] by taking her true place, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. As long as [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to day. You, Sir Clement [illegible], the master of Alwyne Court [illegible] I, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], working for my [illegible] as [illegible] as I [illegible] [illegible]."

"[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Lisbeth," he said, as he leant on the gate [illegible] down by disappointment and regret.

"Have you done anything to return my love? But believe me, my friendship, and hope you shall always have. As in the past, as in the future, I will be true to you."

hope you shall always have. As in the past, as in the future, I will be true to you."

"[illegible] you [illegible] leave me all alone to battle and [illegible] with [illegible] [illegible]."

"[illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] not be any [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] up [illegible] side. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] expiation [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], or of all [illegible] [illegible] away from me [illegible] [illegible] sake of Lady [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]."

"I [illegible] not merry [illegible]. Am I to bear my burden all alone, with no one to comfort or [illegible]? You are punishing me very [illegible] for the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]."

She shrugged her shoulders. Sir Clement's speech jarred. She was too noble-minded here [illegible] be able to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of which he was capable. Yet still in her heart [illegible] that overwhelming sense of pity which to some extent was born of her belief that he could not help his agony of remorse. That nature had made him mentally deformed as she had made other poor victims physically deformed was Lisbeth's theory, though she was neither sufficiently advanced nor sufficiently logical to be able to reason it out.

"You will not be alone," she said, "you will have Lisa—Lisa to educate and train and love. Believe me, the training of a young girl, Clement, will be no light task [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], though if you do your duty, as you surely will by your own child."

"One would almost think," he said, most unjustly, "that you do not love Lisa [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] you are giving her to me so readily."

"It is the greatness of my love for you both, Clement," she answered, with the tears in her eyes, "that makes me wish you should be together. Lisa can comfort you, which I dare not do. Lisa can, to an extent, take Lady Gertrude's place, which I never can or will. Go then, dear Clement, as I [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] spell, and when [illegible] [illegible] return a different man with fresh ideas and faded memories—begin a new life, with Lisa."

While they were talking at the front gate Dr Watson slipped away at the back. Of course he had heard nothing of their conversation in the garden, but he had heard quite enough to send him away a sadder and wiser man than when he had come there [illegible] a fresh and [illegible] [illegible] an hour ago.

No one would ever get an inkling of what he knew, not even Lisbeth, for he would [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] that he had been [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] what did not concern him.

Why he had done so, none of those about him could have [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] strange [illegible] of a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] might perhaps [illegible] at [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] that the little doctor's manner had become cold and strained in his relations with her. Lisbeth would be spared the pain [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] she had long [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. But [illegible] daily [illegible] [illegible] that she had [illegible] learnt the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], too, as to how matters really stood, would [illegible] Dr Watson [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] a very delicate and difficult situation, which ere long came to his [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] that [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] would always be his object and aim.

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] still at [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], and Dr Watson had been [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] her.

[illegible] some weeks after the shock of her [illegible] husband's sudden [illegible] and death

[illegible] her so dreadful a murder and death she had been too crushed to trouble herself about outsiders, but of late she had begun to take an interest in what was passing around her, and to listen more or less to the bits of gossip about her neighbours with which Lady Marcia sought to enliven her.

Mrs Singleton was by no means so keen about the couple whom the Reverend Abel had married [illegible] circumstances at his thrust on the moor, as he had been, nor were their names indelibly fixed on her brain.

Still, when she heard them so frequently as she was compelled to do in the everyday talk [illegible] she could not help wondering [illegible] a secret fact [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] was not [illegible] Mrs Singleton found [illegible] all she knew and ask him what he thought.

He was at first [illegible] that he looked scared. Then he saw as on a chart the history of the past—saw, too, that with him it rested to cause the cessation of a great public scandal.

Would he be wrong to condone the offence? He thought not, especially as the [illegible] very [illegible] the happiness of two women whom he highly valued. The memory of the sweet Lady Gertrude and the position of the living Lisbeth Glendinning, who was to a very [illegible] a connection [illegible] she was [illegible] to that [illegible] had behaved throughout the whole affair with so [illegible] consideration and true nobleness of heart.

Lisbeth must be saved at any cost, and for her sake [illegible] must be shielded.

To do this he must, however, himself slightly equivocate.

"[illegible] to be trusted?" he asked Mrs Singleton, "and will you be wise and [illegible]?"

"I will be guided entirely by you, nor depart one iota from your counsels. I have perfect faith in you," she answered.

"This is a lecture [illegible] I have known for some time. It has [illegible] and caused many [illegible] hearts. May I ask you not to raise it up, but to let the past be buried as Lady [illegible] has been a grave."

She thought [illegible] and then said

"Your will shall be obeyed. I, a stranger, have no right to come here and bring trouble and [illegible] upon those who have been good to me [illegible]."

He held out his hand, she grasped it firmly and the compact was [illegible].

Clement [illegible] was saved by Dr Watson [illegible]

Of that other awful crime that had been imputed to [illegible] the doctor refused to believe him guilty [illegible] [illegible]

But Dr [illegible] what it was to be brought face to face with the interests of [illegible]

[illegible] when it was to be brought face to face with the interests of empires.

CHAPTER XXXV.—Only a Wedding Kiss

[illegible]

Bellagrandis was en fête. It was Elvira's wedding day. At last Sir Miles's patient wooing [illegible] and the beautiful Miss Delane, the rich heiress of Bellagrandis, was to become the mistress of the Saugery.

Mr Delane had heard Sir Miles's proposal for the hand of his daughter with intense satisfaction [illegible] Mr Delane was a keen reader of character, and was fully alive to Sir Miles's good qualities; sensible enough, too, to be desirous that his daughter should marry a good man rather than a great or rich one, and he spoke the absolute truth when he told every one who congratulated him "that in the whole length and breadth of England there could not have been [illegible] a man he would have preferred for a son-in-law."

Whether Elvira had caught some of her father's ardor—enthusiasm being catching—did not transpire, but she declared herself to be one of the luckiest girls in creation, and surely she seemed very, very happy.

The great [illegible] about to be triumphantly answered, it seemed somewhat strange that Sir Miles himself was far less elated about the coming marriage [illegible]

The fact was, to give, and not to take, was Sir Miles's pleasure, and he had not realised, [illegible] with them, [illegible] was the magnitude of [illegible]

[illegible] he could have presented her with many [illegible] even costly, gift, but with [illegible] as the owner of [illegible] her father [illegible] but he was always number three in a triumvirate of which he naturally felt he ought to be number one.

For a time Elvira could not make out why Sir Miles Barbeary, who, she knew, loved her very dearly, was not the happiest of men.

It was [illegible] a few days before the wedding that the riddle was solved, and by Mrs Singleton.

Elvira had driven over to Brentwale, robed in a sable-lined cloak which Mr Delane had that morning received from town, and presented to his daughter, fearing that the [illegible] during which the honeymoon would be spent, would be cold for his child.

Mrs Singleton was still at Brentwale. She was [illegible] to go to the old Yorkshire home and collect her effects, which were to be housed in a picturesque cottage on the Brentwale estate, where she was to live for the future.

She took a lively interest in everything connected with Elvira's approaching marriage, at which, however, she [illegible] would not be present, owing to her deep mourning.

She had seen some [illegible] given by Mr Delane to the young bride, and admired and rejoiced over them, but this cloak brought the tears into her eyes, and she had much difficulty in preventing herself from going into hysterics.

Elvira looked surprised.

"Abel—my poor, dear Abel," sobbed the

"Abel—my poor, dear Abel," sobbed the widow. "It was the dream and hope of his life to give me such a cheer, but he had not the money till quite lately, and I was to have had one this winter. Oh, Miss Delaine you little know what a pleasure it was to my Abel to load me with gifts, a pleasure which is denied to poor, dear Sir Miles Berkeley."

"How denied to him, Mrs Singleton What do you mean

"Why, I should like to know what on earth there is that he can offer you. You have so much already. I asked him one day what was to be his wedding gift to you, and he replied and he gracious sweet he hoped one long to put on your finger was about the only thing you did not already possess."

She went on to laugh and talk of many other them few ominously careless remarks, but she was very silent during the rest of [illegible]

This then, was the reason of Sir Miles's apparent moodiness. He was eating his heart out about her riches

It had been Elvira's intention, when she drove over to Downcross that morning, to have stayed to luncheon if she had been asked, but these few words made her entirely change her plans

She must get back," she said — she was expected, and could not wait another [illegible]

She was driving home in a little cart, with [illegible] groom for an attendant, instead of [illegible] quently subjected him. Her sudden vagary of to-day would certainly have considerably [illegible] was she outside the park gates at Ewes when—the pony having determinedly set his head homewards—she pulled him round with a resolute jerk, and drove off rapidly in the [illegible] Court, now shut up, its master having [illegible] and long arrived at the Smuggery.

Even the little groom was somewhat surprised; what would the family coachman have been, for Elvira never went to the Smuggery, though she was engaged to its master, and was to be married to him within a week.

There was a good deal of old-fashioned decorum about the way Elvira conducted her love affair, and she never read it as to expect or invite familiarity. Her head however, was wholly in the right place [illegible] was quite willing to make exceptions in set and dried rules when occasion demanded, and here was one indeed was the occasion [illegible] was unhappy, and it was her duty as her promise to comfort to make it happy. [illegible] she do only be true to her self, and [illegible] forward to meet her as [illegible] pained voice, which aroused her instantly

"Elvira! What has happened? Is any thing [illegible]

[illegible] she answered, only I [illegible] and I have to see [illegible] her dear—that is, Sir Miles Berkeley in his Smuggery

And throwing the reins to the little [illegible] she jumped from the pony cart on to the door step

"Will you give me some luncheon?" she asked, before he had time to offer her any "It is not fair to invade bachelor's quarters and ask for luncheon, is it?—but I am starving. Take off this cloak, Miles there's a dear. It is such a weight, it crushes me

He did as he was bid, and then opened the library door, calling to his man who had by this time [illegible] to see Mr. But it is [illegible]

[illegible] that they can already [illegible] the matter is settled

"Sorry, my darling? How I not passed my days in waiting for the happy hour when I should call you mine?

"Then there is something I want very, very much to ask [illegible] you are—something that [illegible] herself, and [illegible] would not hap You will give it me, sir, Miles?"

"Nothing will make me so happy as to know that there is anything I alone can give you, and that money cannot buy. What is it, sweet one?"

"The promise of [illegible] will [illegible] you [illegible] and honest man

He looked at her in some astonishment "You have them both" he said "that is, if I am true and honest. Have you come here to-day because you doubted me

[illegible] a hint had been put? But however [illegible] hint that you thought [illegible] their accompaniments [illegible] or love, my beloved and I wanted to assure you that I set it above them all, the property gift which no money can buy

There was no trace of sadness in Sir Miles's face now. With [illegible] and [illegible] hand she had swept away all [illegible] From that hour forth he knew that she loved him better than all else in life. What a woman like Elvira Delaine makes, unbidden, such a confession of affection, it is because her heart is moved to its utmost depths

Miss Pate sent in a luncheon which even the [illegible] the chef [illegible] have surpassed, and later in the afternoon Elvira went into the [illegible] and had a long chat with the housekeeper who was an [illegible] Elvira evinced her [illegible] interest in every [illegible] and went over [illegible] the Smuggery carrying with her the good opinion of all the dependants. It was a happy thought that had come to her when she paid the visit, for not only had she smoothed away the only [illegible] there was in Sir Miles's happiness, but all the servants of the Smuggery would dance the more briskly at the wedding now that they had seen for themselves how much charm and real good [illegible] and [illegible] their future mistress possessed

senses and blindness their future mistress possessed.

At last the happy day dawned, bright with spring sunshine. The village church was thronged.

Luxurious and grand as is a London wedding, with its pomp of service and musical accompaniments, there is no prettier sight than when the nuptial knot is tied in a country church.

On this occasion everyone had done their best; flowers there were in profusion, chimes of merry bells, village children in spic and span new dresses, which were Elvira's gift, all delighted to do homage to the bride they loved so well.

Of course Lady Marcia was there, in a state of fussy and somewhat overwhelming excitement. She had fortunately given up all idea of becoming the mistress of Ballagranda, which was as well, considering that Mr Delane had no intention of surrendering his freedom.

Numberless friends and acquaintances had come by special train from London, and, of course, all the country had been invited. Altogether it was the grandest affair that had agitated the country-side for many a long year, and, since no one, great or small, had been forgotten, there had been no heart-burnings.

Even the banquet given a few months ago at Colmhill, in celebration of the birth of the heir to Aboyne Court, was eclipsed by these magnificent marriage fetes, which continued for quite a week after the bride and bridegroom had departed.

It almost seemed, so bright and gay was everyone, as if the remembrance of Lady Gertrude had no place in the hearts of any of her old friends, and that Sir Clement Dunraven, under the painful circumstances, too, in which he had departed, was not missed.

Yet, perhaps, no one regretted the sad story of the past few months more than the bride and bridegroom, who were intensely gratified to find that he had not wholly forgotten them.

On their return to Ballagranda from the church a telegram was handed to them, addressed to Sir Miles and Lady Berkeley. It was from Sir Clement Dunraven, wishing them "every blessing which goodness and sincerity deserved."

It was a strangely-worded missive, dating from Malta, and save to those who could more or less read between the lines it savored somewhat of eccentricity. And amid these gay wedding festivities what place had Lisbeth Glendinning? None. The angel of Death had once more spread its wings about her path, and much though it would have gratified her to have seen Miss Delane married to the good and true Sir Miles, she had a sadder and more solemn duty which kept her at home.

Jim Glendinning was dead. The information he had in such an uncalled-for manner vouchsafed to Dr Watson seemed to have used up his last gleam of intelligence; the day after, darkness set in once more, a darkness which was the fore-runner of the night of death. Though he lived some weeks he never rallied from this last seizure, and the evening before Elvira's wedding he passed into his rest.

Had the sufferings he had gone through in connection with that terrible trial been any expiation of the sins and crimes of his youth, Lisbeth wondered, as she looked on the inanimate form. With a fervent prayer that it might be so she closed the dim eyes, and a scalding tear fell on the furrowed brow as she stooped and kissed it.

"Where was Lisbeth? I never saw her at our wedding. Strange she should keep in the background." Elvira had said to Sir Miles, when they were discussing the event.

And he, too, remarked that he had not seen her, and that it was surprising that she had not come.

For Lisbeth, ever thoughtful for others, had carefully concealed the fact of her father's death until the wedding should be over. If she could help it no sadness should be mingled with their joy. It was not until quite ten days later, when Sir Miles received a letter from Dr Watson about some business matters, that they learnt the reason of Lisbeth's absence.

Six weeks passed, and then the happy couple came home to the Snuggery, just as all nature was bursting into bud and blossom.

Then the fetes recommenced, for everyone thought it necessary to welcome them with festal acclaim. In fact, so numerous were the parties given that it seemed as if the neighborhood was never going to settle down again into its normal condition of monotonous routine. Not only were Sir Miles and Lady Berkeley most popular people, but everyone was so glad to get out of the dismal groove into which the troubles of Aboyne Court had cast them all.

There were no clouds now on Sir Miles's brow. Ever since the day Elvira paid that impromptu visit to the Snuggery they had lifted to descend no more. There was not a happier man in all the realm. He had realised the magic of that golden circlet about which he had talked somewhat sadly to Mrs Singleton, for the coy maiden who would scarcely allow herself to be wooed, had become the most affectionate and devoted of wives.

As Lady Marcia pertly said:

"I suppose now your head is in the noose, Elvira, and you cannot help yourself, you think it is wise to be subservient to that tyrant of yours, and his slave in all things."

Which Elvira answered by the assertion that she was perfectly happy, and that she wished Lady Marcia would not interfere with her connubial bliss.

(CONCLUSION NEXT WEEK.)

The Mystery of Clement Dunraven.

BY JEAN MIDDLEMAS.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—The Ghosts of the Past.

"An old, beat man, worn out and frail,
He came back from seeking the Holy Grail."

Scarcely two years had elapsed since Clement Dunraven had left Abbyne Court for the foreign travels, during which he hoped to find that peace of mind which passeth all understanding; when one evening, when he was by no means expected, he crept into his own house by the back door.

One of the maids, who saw him, ran shrieking to the housekeeper and said she had seen Sir Clement's ghost. The housekeeper told her "not to be a fool," and went out to look for herself, and then she too trembled with affright until she heard the well-known voice.

"Don't be alarmed, it is myself: Clement Dunraven in the flesh. I have been very ill, and have come home to die."

"Oh, Sir Clement, why ever didn't you let us know that, we might have had things a bit comfortable for you."

"All right—all right; don't trouble yourself. There'll be comfort enough for me. Light a fire in the library, Lady Gertrude's favorite room, and send for Dr Watson."

The night was a cold one, though it was only mid-October, and the trees were still heavy with mellow, golden foliage.

There was something about Sir Clement's manner and appearance which repelled questions, so the servants bestirred themselves to prepare dinner, get his bedroom ready, and make the place as home-like as the short notice would permit, without asking for any further orders.

Sir Clement, meanwhile, sat down in front of the fire, which had been speedily lighted, and took no notice of any one.

It was not until Dr Watson entered the room that he roused up from his reverie. The summons to come at once to Sir Clement Dunraven had been received by the little doctor with no small dismay, and a presentiment of coming trouble took powerful possession of him; nor was his dread of the future in any way lessened when he saw the man who had sent for him.

"Doomed to death," was the Doctor's mental verdict, and that torture of mind had ended in producing torture of body, he was not slow in deciding.

Sir Clement held out his hand, and said, feebly:

"It is good of you to have come so soon."

How gladly would Dr Watson have grasped it, but that the recollection of the awful accusation made by Jim Glendinning was vividly in his mind. He pretended not to see the extended hand, but drawing a chair close to his patient, tried to speak cheerily.

"Sorry you have come back ill, Sir Clement; we must see if we can patch you up."

But Sir Clement noted at once the want of cordiality, and said, bitterly:

"You cannot 'minister to a mind diseased,' but since I see you know or have guessed the truth, you will make my task easier."

Dr Watson nervously answered with an "Ah," and Sir Clement went on:

"I have not much belief in penitents. They would ruin you if they could, as Singleton tried to ruin me. But I have sent for you, Watson, because I know you to be a true and honest man, and as such you will help me to make the best atonement for the past that is in my power."

"I will use my best endeavors so to do," answered Dr Watson, "but would not Sir Miles Berkeley——"

"No—no," cried Sir Clement, interrupting.

Berkeley has a wife, and, I hear, a child. Let him be happy and ignorant. I will not have him freighted with my misery. You must bear many a tale of wretchedness, Watson; it is in your calling."

"Alas! Tales of wretchedness and suffering that one cannot always assuage."

"There is only one incurable disease of which the torture cannot be alleviated, and that is the disease from which I am dying now—it is called Remorse."

"Oh, Sir Clement, repentance must bring alleviation of suffering, even to the most remorseful."

"I have repented, humbled myself in dust and ashes for my sins, but I am no happier. Remorse gnaws as a canker worm at my heart. Should I be happier if I had made a public confession, and allowed the law to take its course? I think not. Anyway, it would have brought misery and obloquy on innocent people. So I resolved to keep my secret. It is wearing me out, and the severest punishment I can inflict on myself is that I have refrained from my own destruction. However, the end is not far off now, and before that end comes I want you to know the truth."

"What good to tell it, Sir Clement. Before the words have fallen from your lips you may regret having spoken them."

"I can never regret having asked a good man to be the guardian of my child—you will will not refuse?"

Dr Watson winced, but he accepted the guardianship.

"Lisa is my child, continued Sir Clement, "and Lisbeth her mother, my lawful wife, which Lady Gertrude never was."

"Sir Clement, for mercy's sake keep silence. Think of the memory of that pure, virtuous lady, and keep silence."

"To all but you I will do so, but you must know the truth, or you cannot do the best for my child and her brave mother. If I die without a will this property cannot go to Lisa, unless her legitimacy prove. In justice to Lady Gertrude I am going, with your help, to make a will leaving everything to Lisa, my adopted daughter, who is to take the name of Dunraven. This may seem to you to be unjust to Lisbeth, but she agreed to be supplanted by Lady Gertrude, in order that I might become my uncle's heir, and, therefore, she must bear her share of the sorrows brought on me by our joint folly. Ah, if I had never deserted Lisbeth, I might have been poorer, but I should have been a far happier man."

"She is the most sad noblest among women," said the doctor, fervently.

Sir Clement looked at him keenly. His eyes fell as before those of an inquisitor, for he felt that Sir Clement had guessed the desire of his heart.

"I see I have appealed to the right man," said Sir Clement after a pause. "Win her if you can, Watson, and if my blessing, the blessing of a wretched criminal, is of any avail, you have it with all my heart. To know that my poor Lisbeth will have a restful, happy home is far more than I deserve."

Nothing more was said on the matter; what could be said so long as Clement Dun-

Nothing more was said on the matter; what could be said as long as Clement Dunraven lived? Pens, ink and paper were produced, and the last will and testament of Clement Dunraven was written out. In it he left everything of which he died possessed, including Aboyne Court and all its valuables, to his adopted child, Lisa, whose birth had been registered at a registrar's in the City Road under the name of Lisa Ellis, on condition that she henceforth took the name of Dunraven. The guardian and the sole executor to be his tried and valued friend, Richard Watson, M.D. The butler and Brown, the bailiff, were sent for to witness the signature of their master, and this supreme effort having been made, it seemed as if Sir Clement Dunraven's work on earth was nearly done, for he then lay back in his chair in such a condition of syncope that brandy had to be poured down his throat, and Dr Watson decided that he would pass the night at Aboyne Court.

But, considering that he had been left executor and guardian to Lisa, and knowing what his own feelings were towards Lisbeth, he did not believe himself to be justified in remaining there without letting anyone know of Sir Clement's return. So he sent a man on horseback over to the Nursery, to acquaint Sir Miles with the fact of Sir Clement Dunraven's return in very bad health, and to request him to ride over in the morning.

After a time Sir Clement rallied somewhat, and Dr Watson and the butler got him to bed.

He entered in such a strange, semi-comatose state that the doctor took up his position in an armchair, and arranged for the butler to sleep in an adjoining room, so that he might be at hand if his services were required in the night.

As the doctor had expected, the distressing unrest which the unhappy man experienced was most sad to witness. In vain Dr Watson tried every available means to quiet him. He tossed ceaselessly from side to side in feverish excitement, muttering every now and again somewhat incoherently; only Dr Watson, who held the key, understood full well how sorely the poor distracted mind was troubled. As is frequently the case, with the break of dawn the restlessness and excitement grew more intense, and the mutterings became shouts and loud cries for help.

Dr Watson was thankful that the butler was a heavy sleeper. He would not for worlds have had him hear the unhappy man's ravings, and, violent though Sir Clement was, he pluckily determined to manage him, if possible, by himself.

"How dare he come between me and Lisbeth? Ah! the water is deep, and black, and cold. What! no movement, no sound, silence! My God, what silence! No voice, not a leaf stirring; nothing but that black, still water, and the rushes. Ah! the rushes will hide it. Let me go! Let me go! I can stay here no longer. Away, away, from this terrible place. You shall not hold me; let me go. The police are coming! The manacles! The mob in the court! Old Jim's jibbering face! The gallows!"

It was a fearful and awful sight this torture of mental agony, and in all his wide practice Dr Watson had never before witnessed such a scene. He fought through bravely, however, and by means of an anæsthetic, for which he had sent to his surgery early in the evening, he managed to quiet the agitated brain, and by the time the first awakenings of life were heard in the house, Sir Clement Dunraven had sunk into an uneasy, unnatural sleep; while as for Dr Watson, he was so exhausted by what he had gone through, that it was only by an immense force of will that he managed to pull himself together so as to be able to proceed with the terrible duty of tending the wretched man.

Till this hour he had put away from his mind, as the mere chimera of an unhinged brain, Jim Glendinning's assertion about the part which Clement Dunraven had played in the death of Pierre Vaughan. Now he had no further doubt on the subject; the true murderer lay before him, and might even yet be brought to justice.

Dr Watson thought that the hours of his life were numbered; still, there was no saying what turn he might take, or who might hear the ravings which could not fail to convict him.

For himself, he intended to say nothing; the punishment Clement Dunraven had received was a heavy one, and who was he that he should deliver him over to the law, blighting the memory of one true, loving woman, and the life of another by his fall?

Many might cavil at, and argue about Dr Watson's reasoning, and how he justified himself in thus condoning crime, but he cared not. The presence of Death was omnipotent in that room, and the terrors of remorse accompanying it made all earthly punishment seem small and unreal.

The efforts of those interested to keep Lady Gertrude and her memory free from the taint were, however, to meet with success.

When Sir Miles Berkeley arrived, it was to find the sufferer still slumbering. Nor did he ever recover sufficiently to recognise any of those who were about him. The terrible crisis was over, and, thanks to Dr Watson's loyalty, the dire events then revealed would never be divulged.

Sir Clement lingered for many hours, vitality being stronger than the doctor had expected. He took what nourishment they gave him apathetically, but did not speak; the brain was numbed, and the pulse and powers were gradually growing feebler.

Towards evening a tall figure in a long blue cloak came up the stairs with a halting step, and Lisbeth gazed for the last time into the living face of the man she had so desperately loved, that she had sacrificed all her happiness in life for his dear sake.

She knew nothing of the will, nothing of what had been done for Lisa, and she asked nothing. All her thoughts were absorbed in him who lay there dying in the prime of his manhood, the victim of his own sins.

Nor were there any tears in her eyes as she looked at him, but prayers, heartfelt and deep, were in her heart; prayers that he might not be punished everlastingly for his grave transgressions.

Considerate always, Dr Watson went away, and left her with the dying man. He would not pry into the secrets of that woman's heart, and truly a veil should be drawn over her sorrow and her agony.

An hour later Clement Dunraven was dead, and the tall figure went down the staircase noiselessly, as she had mounted it, away into the silent night, where the moon, shining brilliantly to guide her steps, and the stars effulgently beaming, gave her hope that the pathway even through the valley of the Shadow of Death was not wholly drear, and that mercy was extended even to the greatest sinners.

The news of Lisa's heirship, which was spread about soon after Sir Clement's funeral took the entire neighborhood by surprise, and, of course, various were the comments made upon it. Everyone whispered

[illegible] ments made upon it. Everyone whispered to his intimate that he knew the truth, had known it for years, but no one guessed the middle-aged [illegible] Dr Watson and Mrs Singleton, and they were silent as the grave wherein the dead lay buried.

And so, after awhile, the gossip ceased, the social gatherings re-commenced, and the world ran on its usual course, as if Sir Clement Dunraven had never existed.

Dr Watson took means to have Lina educated in a manner befitting her future position, and was ably assisted by Lisbeth.

Whether the little doctor will ever persuade Lisbeth to give up her "Home" and its suffering inmates, and begin life anew with him in the red-brick house on the outskirts of the town, is one of the problems of the future.

Lady Marcia says that, of course, she ought to marry him, and that there is plenty of money to found a real big "Home" in memory of Lady Gertrude.

Hitherto Dr Watson has been too shy to put the question himself, and if the marriage takes place, it will probably be because Lady Marcia has brought it about.

[THE END.]